This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HN 224D 8

~~F1413.10~~ KF929
A

Harvard College Library.

THE PARKMAN COLLECTION.

BEQUEATHED BY

FRANCIS PARKMAN,
(H. C. 1844).

Received January 17, 1894.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

AGE OF LOUIS XIV.,

FORMING PART VII. OF MARTIN'S HISTORY OF FRANCE.

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR TO THE TRANSLATOR.

PARIS, January 25, 1865.

DEAR MISS BOOTH, —

I have at length received the two volumes of the *Age of Louis XIV.* I have already read a very large part of them, and, by preference, the chapters most difficult, most abstract, — those which were the hardest to put into a foreign tongue. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for so energetic, so persevering, and so completely successful an effort to express with perfect fidelity, not only the substance, but the turn of expression of the author's thought, the physiognomy of the ideas. Your work appears to me a true model of what a translation should be, — neither an unfaithful paraphrase, nor a not less unfaithful *word-for-word* translation, wherein the heavy imitation stifles the spirit as much as the paraphrase. It is elegant without artificiality, vigorous without stiffness, and always clear. The literary and philosophic history surpasses what seemed to me possible: all those passages of metaphysical exposition concerning Leibnitz, Spinoza, Malebranche, etc., have left no difficulty unsurmounted, no cloud on the true meaning of the thought. It is needless to say, after this, that the narrative and political history is fully satisfactory: what I have read of it answers to me for the rest.

I will sum up all in a few words, — happy is the writer that meets with such an interpreter!

Believe me, dear Miss Booth,

Yours faithfully and gratefully,

HENRI MARTIN.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Miss Booth has translated these volumes admirably. She has almost made an original work of the book from the thoroughness of her comprehension of the original. . . . As a rule, the work is extraordinarily correct; very few mistakes in facts or figures appearing in its pages, though figures occur in hundreds, and facts in thousands. It is seldom we have read so trustworthy a book. Merely as an authority, it should be owned by every one who takes a reasonable interest in the history of the most important period of the great French nation." — *Boston Traveller.*

"It is rarely indeed, that, by any peculiar foreign idiom or infelicitous rendering, we are reminded that we are reading a translation. Miss Booth has naturalized the work in the English tongue." — *N. Y. Evangelist.*

"The work should be in every public and private library in the country. The mechanical execution is in the best style; and the book may be called one of the best printed as well as one of the most valuable works ever issued in the United States." — *Boston Transcript.*

"It is a marvel that Miss Booth has been so successful in transferring to idiomatic English not only the eloquent style of Martin, but the niceties of philosophical discrimination." — *Congregationalist.*

"The translation is worthy of the original. No one who has not made the attempt can comprehend the difficulty of translating a French historical or didactic work into pure, vigorous, idiomatic English. Not five in a thousand translators will succeed perfectly in the attempt. It is the rare praise of Miss Booth's translation of this valuable history to say that she has been completely successful. She has indeed *transfused* rather than *translated* the work, making it as thoroughly English as Macaulay or Prescott." — *N. Y. Examiner and Chronicle.*

Digitized by Google

HISTORY OF FRANCE,

FROM

THE MOST REMOTE PERIOD TO 1789,

BY

HENRI MARTIN.

Pulvis veterum renovabitur.

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION FROM THE FOURTH PARIS EDITION,

By MARY L. BOOTH.

VOLUME XV.

BOSTON:
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY.
1866.

Digitized by Google

This work has received the Great Gobert Prize from the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres and the French Academy.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MARTIN'S HISTORY OF FRANCE.

THE

LINE OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

By HENRI MARTIN

TRANSLATED FROM THE FOURTH PARIS EDITION.

By MARY L. BOOTH.

VOL

BOSTON:
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY.
1866

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MARTIN'S HISTORY OF FRANCE.

THE

DECLINE OF THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

By HENRI MARTIN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FOURTH PARIS EDITION,

By MARY L. BOOTH.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY.
1866.

Digitized by Google

~~Fr 4413.10~~ KF 929 A
~~Park. 3.40~~
Harvard College Library
Bequest of
FRANCIS PARKMAN
17 Jan. 1894

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by
WALKER, FULLER, AND COMPANY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

Geo. C. Rand & Avery,
Stereotypers and Printers, 3 Cornhill, Boston.

Digitized by Google

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

In accordance with our plan of publication presented in the first volume of the AGE OF LOUIS XIV., the concluding part of the HISTORY OF FRANCE is now offered to the public.

The period embraced in the four volumes now translated and published extends from 1661 to 1789, — the date of the Revolution, — where Thiers takes up the narrative.

In continuance of our plan, we purpose to issue, next, *Part I.* of the History, — ANCIENT GAUL, 1600 B.C.–987 A.D., — after which the parts will follow in regular order. The following is a synopsis of Part I.: —

Independent Gaul. Origin, Progress, and Conquests of the Gaulish Race. Genius, Manners and Customs, and Religious Beliefs, of the Gauls. Decline of the Gaulish Race. Invasion of Gaul by the Romans. Organization of Gaul under the Romans. Appearance of the Franks. Great Barbarian Invasions. End of the Roman Empire. Struggle between the Franks, the Visigoths, and the Burgundians. Subjection of Gaul by the Franks. The Merovingian Kings. Fredegonda and Brunhilda. The Sluggard Kings and the Mayors of the Palace. Charles Martel. Pepin *le Bref*. The Carolingian Kings. Charlemagne. Louis *le Debonnaire*. Commencement of Feudalism. Formation of the French Nationality. Norman Invasion. Rollo. Definitive Establishment of the Normans in Normandy. Civil Wars. Fall of the House of Charlemagne. Election of Hugh Capet, and Beginning of the Dynasty of the Kings of the Third Race.

WALKER, FULLER, & CO.

BOSTON, *December*, 1865.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

TO THE AMERICAN READER.

THE skilful translator, who, with accomplished intelligence and fidelity, has presented to the American public the portion of our work relative to the *Age of Louis XIV.*, encouraged by the kindly welcome which this publication has obtained, now offers to her fellow-countrymen the continuation of the *Age of Louis XIV.*, — the history of France in the eighteenth century, from the death of the Great King to the opening of the French Revolution.

The essential characteristics of this last period of ancient France are, first, the decline of the monarchy, of the privileged orders (nobility and clergy), and of the great monarchical magistracy (parliaments), in short, of all the ancient régime; secondly, the continual rise of the Third Estate (bourgeoisie), and the constant progress of the sciences and of social and political ideas, — the ideas of humanity, justice, liberty, and equality; and thirdly, the decline, *per contra*, of religious and metaphysical ideas, the effect of the reaction against the abuse of religion in the time of Louis XIV. From this progress on the one hand, and this decline on the other, would result both the greatness and the inadequacy of the French Revolution, which, after three-quarters of a century of effort and conflict, has not yet succeeded in uniting these two orders of ideas, the political idea and the religious idea, in the new conception demanded of the future.

The two volumes which appear at this moment narrate, therefore, the double progress, in an inverse direction, of the monarchy towards its ruin, and of the public spirit towards its revolutionary growth, until this spirit became strong enough to pass from the sphere of ideas to that of facts; to enforce upon royalty the ministry of Turgot, then the AMERICAN WAR; and thus to oblige the Monarchy itself to aid, by the sword of France, in the foundation of the model Republic, which was about to realize, on the other side of the ocean, the Utopian visions of our philosophers, become a truth.

Digitized by Google

This prodigious event, which so closely preceded the useless reaction attempted by royalty and the fall of the ancient régime, takes place in the second of the two volumes now presented to the American public. Let the reader of the New World transport himself for a moment in spirit to Old Europe, in order to behold from the shores of France, and with the sentiments and moral tendencies of the French of the eighteenth century, the rising above the waves of the Atlantic of that new sun, which, contrary to the laws of astronomy, dawned in the West.

This sun of liberty seemed of late on the point of eclipse: it was predicted that its disk, shorn of its rays and tinged with a bloody red, was about to become extinct; but the star, conquering its malignant influences, shines to-day with a more brilliant splendor than ever, and pursues its triumphant career. The destinies of the Great Republic are thenceforth insured.

It was said that the pestilential excrescence which it bore on its side was incurable: the cancer of slavery has been extirpated by the sword, and the wound is already cicatrized. It was said that American liberty would perish in the first great war; that every democracy that had recourse to the sword was doomed to military dictatorship. The great armies have come; the dictatorship has not appeared; and the free institutions remain standing. The armies have laid down before the law the weapons which they had taken up in defence of the law. The chief magistrate, immolated by the enemies of the people, has been peaceably succeeded by another faithful representative of equal liberty. The work hallowed by the blood of the great martyr of Democracy, the work of reparation, will be achieved to the honor of America, and for the example of the world.

May the moral tie which binds America to her earliest ally never be relaxed! An accident of policy may raise up a cloud, at times, between the United States and France: it is the error of a day, which will be dispelled on the morrow. Great interests, permanent, ineffaceable sentiments, essentially unite our two countries, and not only our two countries, but Europe in general and America. Sons of the same race, — the free and progressive race of the Japhet of the Bible, and inspired with the same genius; for, from the standpoint of universal history, there is but a shade of difference between Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, Celts, and Latins, — we should see in your greatness only a cause for emulation, and not a menace. It is not from you that our peril comes; and the destinies to which we aspire, far from being adverse to yours, will place us in full harmony with you.

Digitized by Google

Between America, delivered from slavery, and restored to the unlimited development of her incomparable activity, her creative force, and her purified liberty, and Europe, rid of the mischievous Muscovite influence; Europe, rejuvenated by the spontaneous and fruitful association of her nationalities, and at liberty to set to work both her rich treasure of ideas, arts, and traditions, and the diverse inspirations of her national characteristics, — varied notes of a brilliant concert, — what happy exchanges will unceasingly be effected for the purpose of developing and insuring the peaceful future of civilization over the whole globe!

1773 created the New World.

1789 inaugurated the regeneration of the Old World. Despite so many oscillations and reactions, this regeneration, with God's aid, will be achieved.

These two immortal dates opened a new era to the history of the human race.

HENRI MARTIN.

Paris, November, 1865.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

THE REGENCY.

Page

LAW'S SYSTEM. — CHILDHOOD OF LOUIS XIV. — THE DUKE OF ORLEANS declared Regent. — Reaction against the Government of Louis XIV. Attempt to govern by Means of Councils. Financial Distress. Administration of the Duke de Noailles. Revision of the Debt, and partial Bankruptcy. Attempts at Reform. Noailles replaced by LAW. Exposition of Law's SYSTEM. The Bank and the Indian Company. Advantages of Credit. Revival of Commerce and of the Merchant Shipping. Stock-jobbing. *The Rue Quincampoix.* Profusion of the Regent, and Rapacity of the Great Lords. Decline of the System. Acts of Violence employed to sustain the Paper-money. Gold and Silver prohibited. Fall of the Bank. Reorganization of the Indian Company. Law quits France. New Bankruptcy. Results of the SYSTEM. (1715–1723.) 1

CHAPTER II.

THE REGENCY *(Concluded)*.

MINISTRY OF DUBOIS. — Dubois induces the Regent to adopt the English Alliance for the Interest of the House of Orleans. Concessions to England and Austria. Alliance with England, Holland, and Austria. Spain attacks Austria in Italy. Anglo-French Intervention in Favor of Austria. Spain, invaded, is forced to make Peace. Modifications of the Treaty of Utrecht. Sicily given to Austria. Alliance with Prussia. Peace in the North reëstablished through the Mediation of France. Peter the Great at Paris. Russia and Turkey make Advances to France. Dubois wards them off to avoid endangering the English Alliance. Dubois Cardinal. Return to Despotism and Ultramontanism. Dubois resumes the Policy of Louis XIV. at Home while destroying it Abroad. Death of Dubois. Death of the Regent. (1715–1723.) 69

CHAPTER III.

MINISTRIES OF THE DUKE DE BOURBON AND THE CARDINAL DE FLEURI.

SECTION 1. — MONSIEUR LE DUC. — Government of Madame de Prie and Pâris Duvernei. New Monetary and Economic Subversions. Archbishop Tressan. New Persecutions against the Protestants. Income Tax of One-fiftieth. New Rupture with Spain. Marriage of the King to Maria Leczinska. Popular Sufferings and Agitations. Spain and Austria become reconciled. Austrian *Pragmatic Sanction*. Contest between *Monsieur le Duc* and Fleuri, the Precep-

Digitized by Google

Page

tor to the King. Overthrow of *Monsieur le Duc*. SECTION 2.—THE CARDINAL DE FLEURI.—System of Supineness. Economy Within; Peace Without; no Reforms; no Innovations; the French Marine sacrificed to England. Fleuri and the Walpoles. Reconciliation with Spain. The Cardinal de Tencin. Persecution of the Jansenists. Dissensions of the Parliament and the Ministry. Miracles of the Deacon Pâris. SECTION 3.—THE MINISTRY OF FLEURI CONTINUED: WAR OF THE POLISH ELECTION.—Death of Augustus II., King of Poland. France supports, for the Throne of Poland, Stanislaus Leczinski, the Father-in-law of Louis XV. Russia and Austria support Augustus III. Fleuri, through Fear of the English, does not earnestly sustain Stanislaus. Siege of Dantzic. Heroic Death of Plélo. Stanislaus, elected by the Poles, is overthrown by the Russians. France avenges herself on Austria. France, Spain, and Sardinia attack Austria in Italy. Battles of Parma and Guastalla. The Austrians are expelled from the Two Sicilies and from nearly all Lombardy. Scheme of CHAUVELIN, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the Independence of Italy. Fleuri does not support it to the End, and dismisses Chauvelin through Jealousy. Peace of Vienna. Milanais restored to Austria, and Parma ceded to her on Condition of her Renunciation of the Two Sicilies in Favor of the second Son of Philip V. Lorraine given to Stanislaus, to revert to the Crown of France; and Tuscany given in Exchange to the Duke of Lorraine, the Son-in-law of the Emperor. Guarantee of the Austrian *Pragmatic* Sanction. Great Spontaneous Impulse of Commerce, the Merchant Shipping, and the French Colonies in the East and West Indies. Contrast between the Wretchedness of the Rural Districts and the Ostentation of the Towns and Seaports. (1723–1739.) 113

CHAPTER IV.

CLOSE OF FLEURI'S MINISTRY.—GOVERNMENT OF LOUIS XV.—WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

SECTION I.—CLOSE OF FLEURI'S MINISTRY.—WAR WITH AUSTRIA.—War of Russia and Austria against Turkey. Mediation of France. Intervention in Corsica. War between England and Spain. Accession of FREDERICK THE GREAT in Prussia. Death of the Emperor, Charles VI. Accession of MARIA THERESA in Austria. Coalition between France, Bavaria, Prussia, Spain, and Saxony, against the Austrian Heiress. Conquest of Silesia by the Prussians. Invasion of Upper Austria and Bohemia. The Elector of Bavaria elected Emperor. Maria Theresa arouses the Hungarians and Slavonians of the Upper Danube in a Body, and recovers Upper Austria and Bohemia. Death of Fleuri. SECTION II.—LOUIS XV.—WAR WITH AUSTRIA, CONTINUATION AND END.—The King resolves not to choose a Prime Minister. Anarchy in the Council. England, Holland, and Sardinia succor Austria. Invasion of Bavaria by the Austro-Hungarians. Battle of Dettingen. Invasion of Belgium by the French. Alsace invaded by the Austro-Hungarians. Madame de Châteauroux. Illness of the King. The Austrians repulsed. Accession of Madame de Pompadour. Victory of Fontenoy. The King of Prussia withdraws from the French Alliance. Conquest of Milanais, Parma, and a Part of Piedmont, by the Franco-Spaniards. D'Argenson, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, resumes the Projects of Chauvelin for the Independence of Italy. D'Argenson's Views concerning Poland, and concerning French Policy in general. Secret Treaty with Sardinia. Breaking-off of the Treaty, and Dismission of D'Argenson by the King. The Italian Conquests lost anew. Invasion of Provence by the Austro-Piedmontese. Revolt of Genoa

Digitized by Google

Page

against the Austrians. Provence liberated. Victory of Raucoux. Belgium conquered. War in America and India. Loss of Louisburg. La Bourdonnais at the Isle of France. Dupleix in India. Great Designs of Dupleix trammelled by the Incapacity of the Ministers. Capture of Madras from the English. Misfortunes of La Bourdonnais. Triumphant Defence of Pondicherry against the English by Dupleix. Ruin of the French Navy. Invasion of the Dutch Territory. Victory of Lawfeld. Capture of Maestricht. Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Reciprocal Restitution of Conquests, with the Exception of Silesia, Parma, and a Portion of Milanais ceded by Austria. (1739–1748.) 199

CHAPTER V.

The Philosophers.

Section I. — Society. Men of Letters. The Fine Arts. The Family. Moral Condition. The Great Nobles and the Church. Massillon. Prophecy of Leibnitz. Section II. — Criticism. Erudition. Historical Systems. Moral and Political Sciences. Fréret. Boulainvilliers. Dubos. *The Club of the Entresol.* The Abbé de Saint-Pierre. D'Argenson. *Considerations on the Government of France.* Philosophy and Letters. Voltaire. His Plays. Montesquieu. Persian Letters. *The Henriade.* Voltaire in England. He brings back to France Sensualism and Newtonianism. His Inconsistent Deism. His Tolerance. His Historical Works. Scientific Voyages. La Condamine, Maupertuis, etc. The Earth Measured. Bordeu. *Vitalism. Freemasonry.* Vauvenargues. *Spirit of Laws.* (1715–1750.) 296

CHAPTER VI.

Louis XV. (*Continued*).

France and her Colonies. — Manufactures and Commerce. Reign of Madame de Pompadour. The *Parc-aux-Cerfs.* Machault attempts to reform the Finances. He is thwarted by the Resistance of the Privileged Classes. Quarrels of the Parliament with the Clergy and the Court. War of the *Certificates of Confession.* Secret Diplomacy of Louis XV. Progress and Conquests of Dupleix and Bussi in India. The whole Deccan under the Rule of France. Greatness of the Plans of Dupleix. He attempts to secure India to France. He is disavowed and recalled through Deference to England. Hostilities between the French and English Colonists of the American Continent. Respective Situations of Canada and British America. The English attack Canada, and capture our Merchantmen without a Declaration of War. Pusillanimity of the Cabinet of Versailles. Long and Useless Negotiations. Opening of the Seven-Years' War. (1748–1756.) 388

CHAPTER VII.

Louis XV. (*Continued*).

Seven-Years' War. — The French Navy aroused. Naval Victory of Mahon, and Conquest of Minorca. Defeat of the English in America. Opportunity to repair the Abandonment of India. Fatal Diversion. Madame de Pompadour, gained over by Maria Theresa, plunges France into a Continental War. Alliance with Austria. Conflict between Austria, France, Russia, and Saxony, on the one hand, and England, Prussia, and the House of Brunswick, on the

Digitized by Google

Page

other. Criminal Attempt of Damiens. Fall of Machault and the Count d'Argenson. Insignificance and Obscurity of the Ministers of France. Ministry of Pitt in England. The French in Germany. Victory of Hastenbeck. The Anglo-Hanoverians capitulate at Kloster-Zeven, then violate the Capitulation. Rout of Rosbach. Military Superiority of the Prussians, and Disorganization of the French Army. Exploits and Genius of Frederick II. He is saved by the Intrigues of the Court of Russia. Heroic Defence and Success of the Canadians under Montcalm. Defeat of Crefeld. Loss of Louisburg and Senegal. Loss of Chandernagore. Successes, Mistakes, and Reverses of Lally in India. Loss of the Deccan. Final Ruin of the Plans of Dupleix and Bussi. Ravages of the English on the Coast of France. They are defeated at Saint-Cas. Accession of Choiseul, Prime Minister, in fact, under Madame de Pompadour. Projected Descent on England. Maritime Disasters of Lagos and Croisic. The Navy demoralized like the Army. Loss of Guadaloupe. Defeat and Death of Montcalm. Loss of Quebec. Last Efforts of the Canadians, abandoned by the Mother-country. Last Victory before Quebec. The Canadians, hemmed in by three Armies, capitulate at Montreal. Admirable Defence of Frederick II. against the Austro-Russians. Ruinous and Inglorious War in Westphalia and Hesse. Financial Distress. Unsuccessful Attempts of Silhouette. Suspension of Payments. Violation of the Public Deposits. Loss of Pondicherry and all French India. Trial and Punishment of Lally. Useless Negotiations with England. Pitt refuses Peace. Loss of Belle-Isle. Family Compact between the Bourbons of France and Spain. Retirement of Pitt. Patriotic Gifts in France for the Revival of the Navy. Frederick II. on the Point of being overpowered. Death of the Czarina Elizabeth. The Czar Peter III. goes over to Prussia. He is dethroned by his Wife, and assassinated in Prison. Accession of Catharine II. She resumes Neutrality. Loss of Martinique. Invasion of Portugal by the Franco-Spaniards. Peace of Paris between France, Spain, and England. Peace of Hubertsburg between Austria, Prussia, and Saxony. France cedes Canada, Louisburg, and Senegal to England, restores Minorca to her, and dismantles Dunkirk anew. France recovers Guadaloupe, Martinique, Goree, Belle-Isle, and Pondicherry. Spain cedes Florida to the English. France cedes Louisiana to Spain. (1756–1763.) 436

Digitized by Google

DECLINE OF THE MONARCHY.

CHAPTER I.

THE REGENCY.

LAW'S SYSTEM. — CHILDHOOD OF LOUIS XV. — THE DUKE OF ORLEANS declared Regent. — Reaction against the Government of Louis XIV. Attempt to govern by Means of Councils. Financial Distress. Administration of the Duke de Noailles. Revision of the Debt, and partial Bankruptcy. Attempted Reforms. Noailles replaced by LAW. Exposition of Law's System. The Bank and the Indian Company. Advantages of Credit. Revival of Commerce and of the Merchant Shipping. Stock-jobbing. *The Rue Quincampoix.* Profusion of the Regent, and Rapacity of the Great Lords. Decline of the System. Acts of Violence employed to sustain the Paper Money. Gold and Silver prohibited. Fall of the Bank. Reorganization of the Indian Company. Law quits France. New Bankruptcy. Results of the SYSTEM.

1715–1723.

WE have set forth, with great elaborateness, the history of the glorious ages of the monarchy. Even after the maxims of State have changed, and the world has passed to new ideas and new laws, the profound study of a great government still offers an abundant harvest to the politician, the administrator, and the economist, — to meditative as to practical minds. The times of decay and decomposition which we enter with Louis XV. will not demand so many details. Facts and characters, every thing is lowered in the political world; lofty thoughts, persevering plans, systematic views, either disappear, or are quickly set aside by the prince, if some patriotic statesman still attempts to revive them; events spring from the most wretched motives, and the historian cannot be asked to follow the caprices of a royal courtesan, or the cabals of intriguers, devoid of breadth, scope, or aim, through all their obscure windings, with the interest and patient attention which he employed in seeking and discerning the idea of a great minister in the secrecy of his cabinet and his correspondence.

The historical interest, during the reign of Louis XIV., has been divided between political facts, and literature, which, in some sort, idealized these facts. Under Louis XV., the interest will be

Digitized by Google

transferred almost entirely to literature, which will be no longer the expression of the present, but the preparation for a mysterious future, and the manifestation of the conflict between ideas and facts. The true life of France is concentrated in this sphere: we will follow it thither.

In the three-fourths of a century that remain for us to pass over, two periods, nevertheless, very different, wholly opposite even to each other, have this in common, that they stand out in bold relief from all the rest,— the first and the last periods. The last, the reign of Louis XVI., will show philosophy striving in vain peacefully to invade the world of facts, and to prevent great conflicts. It is not yet time to speak of this. The first, the Regency, an epoch of corruption, but not of governmental torpor, like that which followed it, is marked with singular originality, and signalized by a social experiment of astonishing audacity. Of this, we are about to attempt to sketch the picture.

At the moment when the crown of Louis XIV. fell upon the brow of a child of five and a half, the power that escaped from the frozen hand of the Great King seemed destined to be disputed between two rivals, the nephew and the natural son of Louis XIV. The Duke du Maine, however, both whose capacity and depravity Saint-Simon so greatly exaggerates, had none of the qualities necessary for the character to which he aspired, or rather which his wife imposed on him. Without fire, without daring, with nothing that attracts men, and engages and retains them in a common cause, using puerile and timorous petty intrigues where great blows, struck with boldness and decision, were needed, he had nothing, in a word, that belongs to the leader of a party. Despite prodigious faults, the Duke of Orleans had an evident superiority over such an adversary. Too much enervated by pleasures, too deeply plunged into sensual carelessness, to be capable of strong and sustained ambition, he knew how to rouse himself for the moment of action. He had not great thirst for power; but, his self-love once at stake, he considered the affair as a game to be won, and did whatever was requisite to succeed in it. Every one was convinced that he would win this game: all had sought, therefore, to make a merit of not waiting for the event. The Marshal de Villars and the principal dukes and peers had assured Philippe of their coöperation; the influential men of the parliament, with the exception of the first president, De Mesmes, the frivolous courtier of the Duchess du Maine, the Attorney-General D'Aguesseau at their head, had decided in favor

Digitized by Google

of Philippe, through hatred of the *Constitutionnaires* (the partisans of the Bull *Unigenitus*), who supported the Duke du Maine; the colonels of the French and the Swiss guards had sold their support to the Duke of Orleans;[1] the commander of the artillery, Saint-Hilaire, and the lieutenant of police, D'Argenson, had been won over to him; the very men on whom Du Maine believed himself able to count with the fullest certainty had betrayed him in advance by revealing to his rival the last wishes of Louis XIV., and the means of setting them at nought, — even to the Chancellor Voisin; even to the Marshal de Villeroi; even to the Duke de Noailles, the nephew by marriage of Madame de Maintenon. The public, a stranger to the interests and intrigues of the courtiers, inclined in a body to the same side, through reaction against the bigoted austerity of the old court and the religious persecutions. The issue of a contest entered into upon a ground so well prepared, and against such an adversary, was not doubtful; and there was little merit in the Duke of Orleans' refusal to accept the offers of money, ships, and soldiers, which George I. had made him through his ambassador, Lord Stair. The respect expressed by Philippe to Lord Stair testified that he by no means esteemed himself offended by these offers, which were the beginning of an alliance between the houses of Hanover and Orleans, destined to be productive of deplorable consequences to France.

By what expedient would Philippe seize upon that power which Louis XIV. in dying had striven to interdict him? Among the intimate counsellors of this prince was one that stood out in strange relief from all the rest, — from those partakers in the suppers of the Palais Royal, whom Philippe, the *boaster of crimes*, glorified in his way by styling them his *roués* (broken on the wheel), "because they deserved to be so." This friend, often seen at Philippe's apartments in the morning, and never at night, was the rigid, caustic, and religious Saint-Simon. Strongly attached of late to the Duke of Burgundy, then the courageous and obstinate defender of the Duke of Orleans against cruel accusations, he believed himself called at last to a high influence long and impatiently waited for, and, because he had dreamed of every thing, deemed himself capable of directing every thing. Possessed by a fixed idea which he carried to monomania, — the political greatness of the dukes and peers, the imaginary heirs of the twelve peers of France and the great feudatories, — he had given Philippe the

[1] The Duke de Guiche, colonel of the French guards, received six hundred thousand francs for this bargain. — See Saint-Simon, t. XIII. p. 217.

Digitized by Google

advice to assemble the dukes and peers, to proclaim himself Regent of the kingdom before them and the rest of the court, and not to go to the parliament till afterwards, purely and simply to declare himself Regent. If adoration of the dukes and peers was the first article of faith of Saint-Simon, the second was contempt for the parliament and the legal profession. As soon as Louis XIV. had closed his eyes, the whole court thronged to the house of the Duke of Orleans. Every one treated him as Regent; and part of the great lords made him the same entreaties as Saint-Simon. There was in this a remnant of those aristocratic ideas lately cherished around the Duke of Burgundy. Philippe did not suffer himself to be dazzled: he felt that the parliament, despite its long humiliation and silence, presented a more solid support for the foundation of a regular authority than the dukes and peers, who were not a body, who were nothing definite, and whose most essential prerogative consisted precisely in the right of sitting in the parliament. He chose rather to follow the beaten track than a new and hazardous path: he stood on his guard, and convoked the parliament for the following day.

On the morning of September 2, the Duke of Orleans, the princes of the blood, the legitimized princes, and the dukes and peers, repaired to the Palais: all Paris thronged thither; and Lord Stair arrogantly paraded himself in a gallery, as if pretending to dictate the law to the parliament and to France. Villeroi did not carry the young King thither: this first infraction of the last wishes of Louis XIV. presaged many others. Philippe, welcomed with great favor and marks of respect by the parliament, began by a speech more adroit than sincere, in which he ascribed to the King very improbable sayings, such as these: "I recommend the Dauphin to you; serve him as faithfully as you have served me, and labor to preserve his kingdom for him: if he should be taken away, you will be the master, and the crown will belong to you. . . . I have made the arrangements that seemed to me the wisest; but, as it is impossible to foresee every thing, if there is any thing that is not good, it will be changed." He pretended to have a double right to the Regency, both by his birth, and by the intentions expressed to him verbally by the late king; protested that he had no other design than to relieve the people, to retrieve the finances, to maintain peace within and without, and, above all, to restore union and tranquillity to the Church: he requested in advance "the wise remonstrances of this august assembly" (the parliament) to aid him in attaining this end, and entreated the assembly

Digitized by Google

to examine the rights given him by his birth and by precedents, immediately after the reading of the royal testament, and before discussing it.

At the first word announcing the restitution of the *right of remonstrance*, the whole parliament was won: the advocate-general, Joli de Fleuri, gave conclusions in conformity with the pretensions of the prince. The testament of Louis XIV. was extracted from its hiding-place; and the reading of it was listened to in disapproving silence. The Duke of Orleans warmly protested against an act, which, he said, had been extorted from the late King, and was contrary to his real intentions: he demanded, instead of a vain title, the entire and independent Regency with the choice of the Council of the Regency. The Duke du Maine attempted to speak: Philippe closed his mouth authoritatively; and the assembly, without even putting the question regularly to vote, proclaimed Philippe Regent by acclamation. The new Regent immediately enunciated the plan of administering the different branches of the government by separate councils subordinated to the Council of the Regency. This was the overthrow of the whole ministerial system on which the monarchy had so long existed, and the application of the ideas of Fénelon, Chevreuse, and Saint-Simon. Louis XIV. had found the plan of this government *by councils* in the papers of the Duke of Burgundy; and it was on this occasion that he had let fall the saying, often quoted, "These people know little of the French, or of the way in which they must be governed."[1] Neither the parliament, nor the princes and the dukes and peers, agreed with Louis XIV., and with reason; they passionately applauded the design of the Regent, and the memory of the Duke of Burgundy evoked by Philippe. Philippe then warmly attacked the clause of the testament that put the person of the youthful Louis XV. and the troops of the King's household at the discretion of the Duke du Maine, and declared this arrangement incompatible with the authority and security of the Regent.

The Duke du Maine attempted at last to defend himself; and a prolonged and obstinate altercation arose between the Regent and him, unworthy of either. Philippe thus relapsed to the level of his rival, and lost part of the ground that he had gained. Many men who had voted for the Regency might hesitate to break the provisions made by Louis XIV. for the education and security of his heir. The friends of the Regent warned him that he was injur-

[1] MS. Memoirs of the Duke d'Antin, cited by Lémontei. — Régence, t. I. p. 44.

Digitized by Google

ing his position, and induced him to adjourn the session. When it reopened in the afternoon, the time had been well employed: the parliament agreed, unanimously, that the command of the military forces could not be divided, and should belong, without reservation, to the Regent. The Duke du Maine exclaimed, that, since he was deprived of the authority assigned him by the testament of Louis XIV., he could no longer be responsible for the King's person, and demanded to be released from his guardianship. "Most willingly, sir!" returned the Regent, and made him give a certificate of his resignation. Philippe, feeling himself in a happy vein, pushed his success to the end: in the morning it had been determined that in the Council of the Regency every thing should be decided by a plurality vote; Philippe observed that this might be practised in the decision of affairs, but not in the bestowal of favors, offices, and benefices; that, in this matter, he needed full liberty. "I wish to be free to reward," said he; "when it is in question to punish, I will recur to the plurality of voices. I wish," he added, adroitly recalling a sentence of *Télémaque*, "I wish to be free to do good, and to have my hands bound to do evil."

The disposal of offices was granted him, and the right to remove the members of the Council of the Regency, as well as to appoint them. This was giving him almost absolute power. The session was closed amidst the noise of acclamations; and there remained no other vestige of the last wishes of Louis XIV. than a parchment, thrust to the bottom of the archives, where history alone would thenceforth interrogate it. All belonging to the Great King had disappeared, — his passions, his errors, and his great thoughts.[1]

It was evident how far every thing was changed in France on the day that the remains of Louis XIV. were carried to Saint Denis, with a retinue shabby to indecency (September 9). The funeral procession of a monarch who bore away with him a whole age of glory proceeded to its mournful destination through jeers and ribald songs. "I saw little tents pitched along the road to Saint Denis," says Voltaire, "where men were drinking, singing, and laughing. The Jesuit Le Tellier was the principal cause of this universal joy. I heard several spectators say that they ought to set fire to the houses of the Jesuits with the torches that lighted the funeral pageant."[2] Louis XIV. was

[1] *Extrait des registres du parlement*, ap. *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 5. — Saint-Simon, t. XIII. chap. xiv.

[2] *Siècle de Louis* XIV. chap. xxviii.

Digitized by Google

nothing, to this people that had idolized him so long, but the persecutor of the *anti-constitutionnaires* and the protector of the Jesuits.

September 12, the young King, who had been provisionally installed at Vincennes "for the good air" (it was the only intention of Louis XIV. that had been respected), was brought to the Palais to hold there a bed of justice, to which were referred all the decisions of the session of September 2. The Regent deemed this idle ceremony necessary to the strengthening of his power.

The first acts of the Regency were marked by a character decidedly reactionary against the past reign. As early as September 5, great reforms had been effected in the King's household, the buildings, and the hunting-establishments, which had been replaced on the same footing as at the death of Louis XIII. This was beginning well, provided that there had been courage to persevere. On the 15th, the declaration appeared which established six councils, — the Councils of Conscience, Foreign Affairs, War, Finance, the Marine, and the Interior, — all under the supreme authority of the General Council of the Regency. The preamble invoked, in support of this innovation, the popular name of the Duke of Burgundy, the example of other kingdoms (Spain and Austria), and even ancient national precedents, which it would have had great difficulty in specifying. "It was necessary," the King was made to say, "that public affairs should be regulated by unanimous agreement rather than by means of authority." [1]

The Regent showed himself conciliatory in the formation of the Council of the Regency: he retained therein the greater part of the personages designated by the testament of Louis XIV., including the legitimized princes. The council was composed of the Duke de Bourbon, chief of the council under the Regent,[2] the Duke du Maine, the Count de Toulouse, the Chancellor Voisin, the Marshals de Villeroi, D'Harcourt, and De Besons, the Ex-Bishop of Troyes, Cheverni, the Ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Torci,[3] and the Duke de Saint-Simon. The Regent had offered Saint-Simon the presidency of certain of the separate councils; but he preferred to remain at the centre, thinking to exercise

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 36, *et seq.*

[2] The other princes of the blood were too young to enter the council: the Prince de Conti was summoned to it as soon as he was twenty-three years of age.

[3] The Secretaries of State, become useless by the suppression of the ministries, were reimbursed for their offices, save one alone, La Vrillière, who was retained as Secretary of the Council of the Regency, without deliberative voice. The comptroller-generalship was likewise suppressed.

Digitized by Google

there a more decisive influence: he found himself there, indeed, in his true sphere, criticising much and doing little.

The Council of the Interior was presided over by the Duke d'Antin, the son of Madame de Montespan, a type of the perfect courtier, *without honor and without temper*, as the Regent defined him, but a man of wit and resources. The Council of War had for president the Marshal de Villars; the Council of Marine, the Marshal d'Estrées (Victor Marie), under the superior authority of the Admiral of France, the Count de Toulouse. In the Council of Finance, the Regent declared himself *ordainer*, "as was the late King;" that is, the higher financial agents were to account to him as *clerks to their master*, and all the ordinances concerning the movement of funds were to be signed by his hand. The Marshal de Villeroi retained the title of Chief of the Council of Finance, which he had held since the death of Beauvilliers; but the effective presidency was given to the Duke de Noailles, the nephew of the Cardinal, who had studied financial questions with the Ex-Comptroller-General Desmaretz, with the secret intention of replacing him, and attaining, through the finances, to the direction of the government. It was enacted that the attorneys-general of the Parliament and of the Chamber of Accounts (*Chambre des comptes*)[1] should have admission to the Council of Finance, whenever they demanded it. The Council of Foreign Affairs was presided over by the Marshal d'Huxelles. The Council of Commerce, organized some time after the others (December 14), was composed of the Presidents of the Council of Finance and the Marine, eight Counsellors of State, or Masters of Requests, among whom was the Lieutenant-General of Police, and deputies from the principal commercial towns: the intendencies of finance and commerce had been abolished. The presidents of the separate councils had the right of admission to the Council of the Regency, together with the right to deliberate, without voting, for the purpose of reporting there the affairs of their respective departments.

The composition of the councils was not so aristocratic or so feudal as Saint-Simon, or even the ancient circle of the Duke of Burgundy, would have wished: the legal profession had too much

[1] The Chamber of Accounts was one of the four sovereign courts of Paris; the others being the Court of Aids, the Grand Council, and the Parliament of Paris. The latter was divided into five distinct chambers, called the Great Chamber, the Chamber of Inquiries, the Chamber of the Tournelle, or the Criminal Court, the Chamber of Requests, and the Chamber of the Edict. The origin and functions of these courts are fully explained in the earlier volumes of this History. — Tr.

Digitized by Google

room in it; but it would have been impossible to dispense with this, even if the Regent had not been systematically conciliatory to the magistracy. "Three kinds of men, chosen through propriety, through weakness, and through necessity, filled the lists of the councils: first the great lords, old in intrigue, novices in business, and less useful by their credit than embarrassing by their arrogance and meannesses; next the friends of the Regent, the élite of the *roués*, fault-finding and perverse, ignorant and witty, bold and indolent spirits, and much better fitted to harass than to conduct a government; lastly, beneath them, were huddled pell-mell counsellors of state, masters of requests, members of the parliament, educated and laborious men, destined . . . to repair without glory and without emulation the mistakes that were to be expected from the incapacity of the first, and the giddiness of the second, of their colleagues.[1]"

More significant, but in another respect, was the Council of Conscience or of Ecclesiastical Affairs, presided over by the same Cardinal de Noailles, who had seen himself on the point of being degraded from the cardinalship and the episcopacy! Noailles had for assessors Besons, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, a prelate unfavorable to the *Unigenitus* Constitution, the Attorney-General d'Aguesseau, and the Abbé Pucelle, Counsellor of the Parliament, representatives of parliamentary Gallicanism. The list of benefices was transferred from the hands of Father le Tellier to those of the Cardinal de Noailles: Le Tellier was banished to the country; and the year following, when Louis XV. was on the point of accomplishing his seventh year, the Abbé Fleuri, the Gallican author of the excellent *Ecclesiastical History*, was appointed the confessor of the King: the Jesuits thus lost these important functions which their order had constantly monopolized since Henri IV. Confession and preaching were interdicted them by several *anti-constitutionnaire* bishops. It was a complete revolution. Even before the Council of Conscience was organized, the Regent had hastened to repair the injustice and violence of the closing days of the last reign. As early as November 10, he had revised all the *lettres de cachet*, and set at liberty or recalled

[1] Lémontei, *Histoire de la Régence*, t. I. p. 46. The men of the robe were not so fully resigned, as Lémontei affirms, to *creep* obscurely *at the bottom of committees*; for the legal counsellors of state claimed and obtained precedence over the military counsellors of state, who were not dukes; and the masters of requests claimed the right of making their reports, seated, before the Council of the Regency. This was accomplishing much. — See Saint-Simon, t. XIII. pp. 273–278.

Digitized by Google

from exile all persons persecuted for Jansenism or for opposition to the Bull. Among the prisoners in the Bastille and in other State prisons were many held for causes no longer known to any one. An Italian traveller had been arrested on the very day of his arrival at Paris, thirty-five years before; and neither he nor any one else suspected the reason. It was thought that it was a mistake! Other captives, the victims of the Bull, quitted the dungeons, not apathetic and lifeless, like this unfortunate, but trembling with rage at the odious treatment that had been inflicted on them by the hatred of the Jesuits, and the base complaisance of the ministers. The public passionately espoused their resentment, and could not find imprecations enough against these monstrous effects of absolute power, which were momentarily disavowed by the holders of royal authority, but which were, notwithstanding, inseparable from all government not subordinated to the laws.[1]

The unhappy Protestants began to hope that the day of justice had dawned also for them; but they were destined to find the persecuted of yesterday, Jansenists and Gallicans, almost as harsh with respect to them as the Jesuits.

Popular edicts respecting the taxes, and favors granted to the sciences,[2] also numbered among the laudable acts of the beginning of the Regency. Other measures much less worthy of praise began to disclose the weakness, inconsistency, and careless pliancy, destined to neutralize the eminent qualities of Philippe of Orleans. While he permitted the relaxation of etiquette, and the confounding of ranks, by way of compensation he attributed exclusively to noblemen the posts of the administration of the studs, which he reorganized, and which the nobility claimed as being something wholly feudal. He lavished gifts on the cupidity of the great lords. The abuse of reversions had reappeared on a large scale towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV., under the form of

[1] Saint-Simon, t. XIII. p. 235.

[2] The Regent occupied himself, with much sympathy, with what concerned the Academy of the Sciences, and gave it, January 3, 1716, a new regulation, liberal and favorable to scientific progress. He also protected the labors of historical erudition, which had been pursued, without interruption, on the most extensive scale since the middle of the seventeenth century. From 1717, the Academy began to publish its papers. In February, 1717, appeared a new regulation of the Academy of Architecture. In 1718 an Academy of Mechanical Arts was established at the Louvre, for the improvement of the trades, and of the manufacture of tools, instruments, and machinery. The mechanical arts thus took their place, in the studios of the Louvre, by the side of the fine arts. This was a souvenir of Henri IV., and the starting-point of the Conservatory of Arts and Trades.

Digitized by Google

patents of reservation (*brevets de retenue*), and had restored in point of fact the vendibility and hereditability of governments and lieutenancies. Far from remedying this abuse, Philippe multiplied it, and thus blindly alienated that free disposal of posts and offices which he had demanded with so much urgency.[1]

The want of solidity could be already foreseen of that impulse of reform, which, by strange combinations, caused the spirit of Fénelon to triumph in politics,[2] Gallicanism, and almost Jansenism, in religious affairs, and libertinism and practical infidelity in manners, in which debauchery became a sort of etiquette. Men became libertines *through policy*. The bigoted courtiers of yesterday began to keep mistresses and to appear intoxicated in public *through propriety;* it was paying court to the Palais-Royal and the Luxembourg, where the well-beloved daughter of the Regent, the Duchess of Berry, piqued herself on rivalling the paternal orgies. There was such a reaction against the sway of a hypocritical and fractious authority, that the Parisian public, carried away by a whirlwind of pleasures and noise, accustomed itself to very lax morality, and tolerated in its new masters the excesses and vices least worthy of indulgence. The Parisians, moreover, were pleased with the Regent for having forsaken Versailles, and installed the young King in the Tuileries (January, 1716), in order to be able to install himself in the Palais-Royal, the centre of his habits and pleasures.

The most important question for the new government was the finances: it was in this that it was about to show of what it was capable. Expedients were no longer in question, but the adoption of a decided course. Louis XIV. had bequeathed to the Regency this perilous responsibility. September 1, 1715, the gross revenue amounted to one hundred and sixty-five and a half millions;[3] the net revenue, to sixty-nine millions; the expenditures, to one hundred and forty-seven millions: consequently, the deficit

[1] Saint-Simon, t. XIII. pp. 234–288; t. XVI. pp. 276–376. Apropos of the studs, it is not useless to remark that they were stocked with English instead of Arabian stallions. There is reason to believe that they proved none the better for it. Villars (*Mém.* p. 379) warmly blames the Regent for having taken away from private individuals the liberty of having mares and stallions, and affirms that, since the reorganization of the studs, the quantity of horses had diminished daily. In the last wars, more than twenty-five thousand horses had been obtained annually from Brittany and Franche-Comté.

[2] The first correct and complete edition of *Télémaque* was published, in 1717, by the nephew of Fénelon, with the approbation and support of the government.

[3] It was not by an advance parallel to that of the public wealth that the impost had thus increased since Colbert; quite the contrary: for the same branches of the revenue

Digitized by Google

of the year was seventy-eight millions. There were five hundred and ninety millions of State notes (*billets d'état*) in circulation, forming, with the rest of the floating debt and the deficit of the year, seven hundred and eighty-nine millions of exigible debts. Of the sixty-nine millions that were reputed to revert to the treasury, all was consumed in advance, save four or five millions: the greater part of the revenue of 1716 had been forestalled after the revenue of 1715. There were from seven to eight hundred thousand francs in the treasury; and the payment of the *rentes* alone amounted to four hundred and twenty thousand francs a day. Neither the revenue farmers nor the opulent personages called to the new councils were willing to advance any thing. The first necessities were provided for by money which the Regent took from his own coffers, and by three millions loaned by the rich merchant Crozat on condition of being invested with the office of paymaster, which gave the right to wear the blue ribbon. This answered for a few days. The aggregate debt exceeded two billion four hundred million francs. The figures, as we have just given them, were not yet clearly discerned; but men were stupefied at the aspect of an enormous, overwhelming mass, the proportions of which they had not duly appreciated.[1]

The great innovators who had meditated or proposed political, social, or financial reforms under Louis XIV., no longer existed; but they had left heirs. Minds greatly inferior, doubtless, to the Fénelons and the Vaubans, but original and singular, besieged the Regent with their counsels. Such was the celebrated Count de Boulainvilliers, of an intellect at once exceedingly bold and profoundly retrogressive, who divided his wholly speculative life among three objects, — 1st, The study of the national origin in the exclusive point of view of the feudal caste; 2d, The study of the occult sciences of the Middle Ages, and especially of astrology, mingled with metaphysical labors which led him to Spinozism; 3d, Statistical researches concerning the existing situation of France, and plans of reform, in which we meet at times, with some surprise, sound and patriotic views proceeding by turns from Vauban, from Bois-Guillebert, and even from Colbert. In the memorials which he presented to the Regent,[2] he insisted

yielded, in 1715, fifteen and a half millions less than in 1683; and the increase of the receipts was due only to the creation of new imposts.

[1] Forbonnais, t. II. p. 398; Saint-Simon, t. XIII. p. 238; Dutot.

[2] These memorials belong to the beginning of 1716; but they were not published till 1729, in Holland. By a somewhat curious contradiction, this passionate feudalist was

Digitized by Google

strongly on the necessity of convoking the States-General, in order to attain, with their aid, the liberation of the State, the simplification of the taxes, the transformation of the duties which fettered consumption, and the abolition of that army of sixty thousand tax-gatherers which was devouring France (there were besides forty thousand unsalaried collectors).[1]

By the side of Boulainvilliers appeared the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, for whom the title of Almoner of the Duchess of Orleans procured access to the Regent,—a pure and naïve soul, a writer without talent, of a mind little elevated, but in which an indefatigable love of the public good took the place of genius. Our language owes to him the word "beneficence," which he was worthy to invent; and philosophy should not forget that he was one of the apostles of perfectibility. Constantly occupied during his long and peaceful career with the interests of the country and humanity, his first Utopia, conceived during the negotiations of Utrecht, whither he had followed the ambassador, the Abbé de Polignac, was universal peace, which he designed to secure by the creation of a European diet, nearly on the model of the Germanic diet. It was the idea of a great politician, Henri IV., deformed and perverted by a commentator at once without practical experience in human affairs and without a philosophy high enough to comprehend on what conditions this idea could cease to be a dream, and become an ideal.[2] Now, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre applauded government *by councils*, and proposed reforms in taxation, reforms very judicious; for the point in question was to substitute the proportional villain-tax for the arbitrary villain-tax.[3]

very friendly to commerce. He wished that a general commercial company for the whole kingdom, without monopoly, should be founded at Paris; that there should be in each parish a chamber, or common exchange, and a separate direction, as well for the common public business of the inhabitants, as for the agriculture, commerce, arts, and manufactures that were carried on there; and that the nobles might be able to be brokers and bankers, without derogating from their nobility. This was written before Law had unveiled his whole system. Boulainvilliers was a Colbertist so far as the balance of trade and protective duties were concerned. He strongly condemned changes in the currency.

[1] Boulainvilliers speaks only of the collectors of the villain-tax. Saint-Simon claims that there were forty-eight thousand employed in the salt-taxes. — T. XV. p. 373.

[2] He wished simply to fix Europe in its existing position, without examining whether this position was in conformity with justice, and without knowing what was the true international law. For a European confederation to be possible or desirable, it was first necessary that the nationalities should be freely constituted.

[3] The *taille*, which it has been thought proper to translate "villain-tax," on the authority of Spiers and Surenne and other lexicographers, as conveying the clearest possible idea of its nature to the English reader, was of feudal origin, imposed on the property of *roturiers*, or those not of noble birth. It varied in different parts of France, and

Digitized by Google

Of these reformers, the rashest and the least sensible was precisely the one that participated in the government, a member of the Council of the Regency, Saint-Simon. Like Boulainvilliers, he desired the States-General; not, however, to agree with them upon certain reforms, but through them to ordain universal bankruptcy! "The King," he said, "comes to the crown by virtue of a feoffment of trust, of an entail made by the nation to an entire house, so long as this house shall endure, and not at all by inheritance or representation. Consequently, every engagement made by the preceding King perishes with him; and the successor is bound by none of the pledges made by his predecessor." He went further, and affirmed that the King, a minor at whatever age, can always retract what has been done by others, or what he himself has done or consented to, against his own interests. As to the States-General, the majority of the three orders would doubtless ask nothing better than to free the State at the expense of its creditors, who were only a minority in the nation; and the greater part, people of *low degree*. This great reform would be to the advantage of the nation by making it thenceforth impossible for kings to borrow, and, consequently, to enter into excessive expenditures or ruinous undertakings.[1]

This, so to speak, ingenuously cynical theory had been expounded to the Duke of Orleans before the death of the King; but Philippe, dissuaded from following the strange advice of Saint-Simon by the Duke de Noailles and the Abbé Dubois, a personage of whom we shall have only too much to say in the future, had already resolved on his course, and desired neither the States-General nor bankruptcy, at least total and avowed bankruptcy. An innovator more ingenious, more seductive, and profounder than those whose projects we have just pointed out, a foreigner whose ideas proceeded from quite a different source from those of our French reformers, murmured magical promises in the Regent's ear, and announced the regeneration of the State and the whole social body by means of a power unrecognized hitherto by our

at different epochs, being levied sometimes on real estate, sometimes on personal property, and sometimes on all property of whatever kind; its peculiar characteristic being, that it solely affected the property of plebeians. Like most of the feudal taxes, it retained its original name and character until the Revolution, when it was abolished. A more elaborate explanation of this and other matters pertaining to the political economy of France in general will be found in the earlier volumes of M. Martin's History of France. — See *Dict. de l'Économie Politique*, by M.M. Coquerel and Guillaumin; *Dict. de l'Administration française*, etc. — Tr.

[1] Saint-Simon, t. XII. ch. xix.

Digitized by Google

greatest statesmen, and successfully attempted, of late, by our neighbors,—THE ORGANIZATION OF CREDIT; but Philippe, although shaken by the genius of Law, and inclined through curiosity and desire of excitement to bold schemes, hesitated to enter upon an unknown sea with this adventurous pilot.

Provisionally, the ascendency in the finances was left to the Duke de Noailles, a statesman who must not be judged wholly from the abuse and extravagant frenzy of Saint-Simon: he was a pliant courtier, a devotee under Louis XIV., and a libertine under the Regency; his mind was too mobile; his ideas, too numerous and too little digested, counteracted each other; but he possessed an intellect as keen as extended, extensive information, and an ambition to do right, although with few scruples as to the means. He strove, before every thing, to provide for the payment of the troops and the *rentes*. The army was reduced twenty-five thousand men; and all the discharged soldiers were exempted from the villain-tax for six years, on condition of leasing an uninhabited house or an uncultivated estate: discharged soldiers who had fulfilled this condition, and who had eight children, neither monks nor nuns, were exempted from all public burdens (November 30, 1715). It was decided to have no further recourse *to extraordinary transactions*, nor to creations of *rentes*. The receivers-general, who, in the absence of all accountability, disposed of a great part of the imposts as absolute masters, pretended to have made enormous advances: they promised, however, two millions for each of the last three months of 1715, and two and a half millions for each month of 1716, the whole designed for the payment of the army. The receipts over and above this engagement were to be employed, first, in withdrawing from circulation the notes signed by the receivers-general, then in reimbursing them for their advances (October, 1715). The receivers-general were unfaithful to their promises. They did not accurately pay in the sums promised, or withdraw their notes from circulation, but emitted new ones. A vigorous course was taken with respect to them, after the example of Sulli and Colbert; namely, to call directly into the treasury the product of the general receipts, without taking into account the real or supposed advances of the receivers-general, until the auditing of their management (declarations of March 24–June 10, 1716). This auditing was intrusted to the four brothers Pâris, the sons of a tavern-keeper of the Dauphinese Alps, who, after having made a fortune as army-contractors, now carried on banking, and had acquired great credit with men in

Digitized by Google

power by their financial talents and their bold and active spirit. In a week, they confirmed seventy-two millions of notes emitted or indorsed by the receivers-general.[1]

It was endeavored, at the same time, directly to relieve the people.

October 4, 1715, a most excellent circular against the abuses in the collection of the villain-taxes was addressed to the intendants, with orders to send it to all the parishes. This circular requested information in order to establish a just equality in the taxes, threatened to force the assessors of subsidies and the receivers to refund fourfold the excessive charges which they had made to tax-payers, and promised a reward to those of the receivers who had been most conciliatory in their proceedings. The taxes levied by virtue of simple ministerial letters, an enormous abuse introduced by the despot Louvois, were abolished: decrees of the council were thenceforth required as before. The villain-taxes were reduced three and a half millions for 1716; abatements were also granted on the capitation-tax, the income-tax, and the revenue-farms. The duties on the transportation of cattle, with the exception of the ordinary tolls, were abolished, as well as other duties on internal traffic; the exportation of grains and dry vegetables was permitted without duties, on acount of the abundance. The fishery duties were suspended; the free introduction of foreign cattle was authorized for a year; freedom of trade was granted on the southern coast of Africa, from Sierra Leone to the Cape (January, 1716). The success of this latter measure was very great; but the trade was deplorable, chiefly involving the traffic in negro slaves, who were brought by thousands to the West Indies.[2] The prohibition of fabrics from the East Indies was renewed, with excessive rigor, in favor of French manufactures (January, February, 1716).

To compensate for the diminution of taxes, the system of Desmaretz, the reduction on the *rentes*, was continued. The *rentes* assigned on the villain-taxes at eight and one-third per cent were reduced to four per cent, like the other *rentes:* this was a total loss of more than one-half. All the divers *rentes* that still con-

[1] Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 49.

[2] An edict of October, 25, 1716, derogated, in favor of our colonists of the West Indies, from a principle that did honor to France. It was decided that negro slaves brought from the colonies to France should no longer become free on touching our soil.—*Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 122. Colonial society grew under sad auspices.

Digitized by Google

tinued unreduced suffered the same fate. The capital of the *rentes* paid elsewhere than at the Hôtel de Ville was reduced to eighty millions: the *rentes* on the Ville amounted to thirty-two and a half millions, at the capital value of twelve hundred and eighty millions. It had been solemnly promised, in October, 1715, never more to alter the coin. This promise was not kept. From the month of December, the value of the coin was increased; the louis d'or was raised from fourteen to twenty francs; the crown, from three francs ten sous to five francs; and the silver mark, from twenty-eight to forty livres. It is just, however, to remark that this change had been solicited by commerce to relieve the debtors crushed by the recent diminutions of Desmaretz. As in every recoinage of this kind, the issue of debased coin attracted abroad the greater part of the profit on which the State counted. The State recovered only seventy-two millions, instead of the two hundred expected by Noailles.

The foreigner of whom we have just spoken, the Scotchman Law, had presented to the Regent an admirable memorial, in which he proved that money should be immutable.

December 7, 1715, the verification and liquidation of all the state-notes were prescribed. This operation, which was termed the *visa*, was intrusted to the brothers Pâris, like the revision of the accounts of the receivers-general. The *visa* of the state-notes had been preceded by the special revision of the army contracts of the last war, and of all the agreements or extraordinary transactions since 1689. During the *visa*, the reduction of the public burdens was continued by arbitrary proceedings; the increased salaries granted to the functionaries were reduced, like the *rentes*, to four per cent; a great number of offices, immunities with respect to imposts, taxations, etc., were abolished, with an indemnity also at four per cent. Paris alone was relieved of two thousand four hundred perfectly useless officers. The treasurers of France were reduced from seventy-one to nineteen per generality.[1] All mayoralties and other municipal offices created hereditary were abolished; and the cities that had not availed themselves of the power granted to them, in September, 1714, to redeem these offices, regained unconditionally their ancient rights of election (June, 1716).[2]

[1] The *pays d'élection* were divided into fiscal districts, called generalities, administered by the crown; the *pays d'état*, or provinces in which the provincial States still assembled, collected, by officers of their own appointment, the supplies which they granted to the crown. — Tr.

[2] On these edicts, see *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. pp. 67–115.

Digitized by Google

Noailles had prepared for himself another resource of a still more violent character. In March, 1716, an edict appeared declaring the establishment of a chamber of justice against revenue-farmers guilty of exactions towards the people, public accountants and commissaries guilty of peculation towards the King, and usurers who had speculated in state-paper, all since 1689. The financial history of the ancient régime offers nothing but alternate depredations of the financiers on the people, and acts of violence of the government against the financiers: it is a constantly revolving circle. It was neither known how to dispense with the revenue-farmers, nor how to regulate their intervention in public affairs. Saint-Simon had made a proposition to the Regent, more reasonable than was wont with him; namely, not to establish a chamber of justice, but to tax the revenue-farmers moderately and secretly, to make them pay without noise, by setting forth the consideration that had been shown in sparing them prosecutions and public taxes; then to employ this money in redeeming the patents of reservation of offices and governments, as well as of regiments, the vendibility of which discouraged good officers without fortune, and demoralized the army.[1] Noailles counted on obtaining larger sums by rigorous means; and he was besides irritated at the intrigues by which the revenue-farmers obstructed the *visa*. Saint-Simon was not listened to, and terror was converted into a system. The royal declaration offered pardon to criminals who should denounce their accomplices; and, to other informers, one-fifth of the fines and confiscations procured through them. Two other declarations (March 17–April 1, 1716) decreed the penalty of death against whomsoever should menace, insult, or mislead the informers; the galleys for life, with confiscation, against the accused who should present false statements of their property; banishment, the pillory, and the galleys, against receivers and accomplices; and permission to all informers, even the lackeys or domestics of those amenable, to depose under borrowed names.

[1] Louis XIV., in his latter years, had endeavored to arrest the dearness by taxing the infantry regiments; but the scourge of vendibility and of colonel-proprietors none the less subsisted. — See Saint-Simon, t. XI. p. 341; t. XII. pp. 363–369; t. XIV. p. 375. Saint-Simon had another happy thought, — the suppression of the compulsory salt-tax; the redemption, by the King, of the salt-works belonging to private individuals; and the sale of salt by the King to private individuals at a fixed price. The financiers of the council caused this project to miscarry, which drew from Saint-Simon the exclamation, "It is impossible to do any good in a government like ours." — T. XV. p. 374.

Digitized by Google

These provisions, which provoked immorality in order to reach immoral acts, were too common in ancient legislation to excite the indignation which they would excite to-day; and the people had suffered too much from the revenue-farmers to be moved to pity by the excessive penalties inflicted upon them. A direct interest was even given to the people in their punishment by causing a part of the confiscated property to be distributed among the inhabitants of the places where the condemned resided. The terror was so great among the revenue-farmers, that several prevented their arrest by suicide; some were executed; others were exposed in the pillory: all the barbarous paraphernalia of torture was displayed in the halls of the Grands-Augustins, where the Chamber of Justice held its sessions.

The event proved, however, that Saint-Simon had judged rightly. All this overflow of violence resulted in very little. The revenue-farmers purchased the support of the great lords, the *roués*, the women of intrigue. The Regent, circumvented and importuned, forgot the solemn stipulations of the royal declaration, which interdicted all gift and all grace in this matter. At the end of six months, the criminal prosecutions ceased; and the corporal punishments were converted into pecuniary penalties, or rather into lists of taxes, involving all who had participated in financial affairs, whether innocent or guilty. The lists contained two hundred and twenty millions, to be apportioned among four thousand four hundred and seventy persons; but the taxes were soon reduced with respect to some, and wholly abolished with respect to others, owing to the intercession of interested protectors. Both the men and the women of the court plunged into this traffic with such ardor, that, in the end, it was no longer the revenue-farmers that went to implore protection from the courtiers, but the courtiers that came to cheapen their protection to the revenue-farmers. One contractor, taxed at one million two hundred thousand francs, escaped in consideration of a gift of one hundred and fifty thousand francs to a coquette of high degree. At no epoch had the court shown itself under an aspect so disgraceful. "From this moment," says a historian (Lacretelle), "dates the intimate alliance of the nobility with the financiers."[1] Many of

[1] This alliance was often very *leonine*. See what Saint-Simon so happily relates of the financier Dunoyer: "This rich man, for his sins, devoted himself to the protection of the Birons, who, in short, drained him so completely, that he died on a dunghill, without one of them having a thought or care about it. It was their custom: several others had enriched them with their substance, and experienced the same fate.

Digitized by Google

the members of the Chamber of Justice rivalled the great lords in venality. On the other hand, public opinion was modified, at least in the middle and commercial classes of Paris. The sale of articles of luxury, which existed, above all, through the farmers of the revenue and the financiers, had languished since they concealed their fortunes, instead of displaying them. There was soon almost as much clamor against the Chamber of Justice as there had been in its favor, although the clamor did not come from the same classes of society. The Chamber of Justice was abolished in March, 1717. In the preamble of the edict abolishing it, the government declared frankly that it had perceived that "the corruption was so widely spread, that almost all conditions had been infected with it, so that it was impossible to employ just severity in punishing so great a number of criminals, without causing a dangerous interruption to commerce, and a species of general convulsion in the body of the State." Of the four thousand four hundred and seventy persons amenable to justice, nearly three thousand had been freed from all taxation. The rest paid in all seventy millions, less than one-third of what Noailles had hoped. It is again asserted that the greater part acquitted their debt in commodities or in discredited paper, so that the State obtained but fifteen millions in ready money. A declaration of March 17, 1717, promised the farmers-general that they should be exempt in future from all taxation and investigation by chambers of justice.[1]

The great operation of the *visa* had terminated ten months before (May, 1716). It had been more advantageous to the treasury than the Chamber of Justice: it was easier to reduce arbitrarily the debts of the State than to force its debtors to pay it. The labor of the revision of the state-notes had aimed at two objects: the first, of incontestable justice, was the investigation of duplicate offices, and of the drafts on the treasury exceeding the necessities which had been delivered to the treasurers. The enormous sum which this investigation produced attested the frightful disorder of the finances. The duplicate offices annulled amounted to over one hundred millions out of five hundred and ninety-six millions! The second object was of a relative equity at most: this was the proportional reduction of the notes sustained by the

Madame de Biron laughed at it as a fine trick, and thought that she had done them too much honor." — T. XV. p. 368.

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 140; Lémontei, *Hist. de la Régence*, t. I. p. 65.

Digitized by Google

visa. The government openly avowed, in the preamble of a declaration of April 1, 1716, that it reduced its debt in proportion to the funds which it was in a condition to furnish; that is, that it became bankrupt because it could not do otherwise. The creditors were divided into four classes: the first, which comprised the military men and the municipal bodies, lost only one-fifth; the second, two-fifths; the third, three-fifths; the fourth, four-fifths: this last was composed of holders of notes that had passed through several hands, and fallen of late eighty per cent. The reduction, together with the drafts on the treasury annulled as surplus, amounted to two hundred and thirty-seven millions, or, including the duplicate offices, to over three hundred and forty millions: there remained, therefore, about two hundred and fifty millions, for the reimbursement of which a like sum of new state-notes was created, with interest at four per cent, payable at the Hôtel de Ville. But the holders of the old paper did not receive the whole of these two hundred and fifty millions in notes. Only one hundred and ninety-eight millions were delivered to them, and the rest was employed in appeasing other creditors;[1] for there existed, as has been seen, other exigible debts, to the amount of nearly two hundred millions over and above the state-notes.

This species of division of the bulk of the floating debt was followed by excellent measures, which were incident to the course adopted towards the receivers-general. Accountability, annihilated since the disastrous ministry of Chamillart, was reëstablished and perfected: double entry book-keeping was applied for the first time to the administration of the public funds in all the *pays d'élection.* The receivers-general and the receivers of villain-taxes were compelled to send to the Council of Finance, every fortnight, a copy of their day-book: all the funds not employed in the localities were to be sent immediately to Paris, and paid in to a central fund administered by ten receivers-general (June, 1716). The allocations of the receivers-general were restored to the rate of the times of Colbert.

Commerce was made, at the same time, the object of new favors. A regulation of 1669, which fettered the traffic in wool, was revoked. The duration of mourning was abridged one-half by request of the merchants; a strange interference of authority in matters of sentiment and propriety, which belong to the sphere of man-

[1] Forbonnais, t. II. pp. 405, 423, 463, 465. In his official statement of 1717, Noailles disguises this diversion by inflating the surplus funds annulled to one hundred millions, so as to reduce to one hundred and ninety-eight millions the notes sustained.

Digitized by Google

ners, and not to the government (June 5, 1716). Society, which was at this moment shaking off the austere yoke of the seventeenth century, was already only too much disposed to relax the family ties. To replace a part of the export duties abolished or reduced on numerous articles of commerce, it was necessary to increase the recently diminished capitation-tax ten per cent for 1716 and 1717,. The *prêt* and the *annuel* of the magistrates, which Chamillart had authorized them to commute for a sum in ready money, were also renewed.[1]

In the course of 1716, it was easy to see that the reduction of the debt, by means more or less legitimate, a reduction compensated for in part by abatements of taxes, could not extricate the State from the financial crisis in which it was struggling, even with the addition of the product of the Chamber of Justice, concerning which Noailles was still greatly deceived. It was necessary either to create new resources, or to diminish the expenditures in a prodigious ratio, and to change all the habits of the monarchy. Again: it was more than doubtful whether economy could ever suffice. Law, who was beginning to make a great figure in France, proposed the first course: Noailles wished to try the second. He proposed the reduction of the expenditures from one hundred and forty-seven to ninety-four millions: every thing was to be reached, the court-pensions like the rest. With these fifty-three millions economized, a deficit for the year, of eighteen millions, was yet apparent; but the Chamber of Justice, it was thought, would amply provide for this. To execute such a plan, another prince than the Regent would have been needed, and even another minister than Noailles. The things that were necessary, like the navy, were the only ones reduced; while all the abuses, and the powerful institutions of no use, rose with such violence in defence of their sacred rights, and the Regent capitulated to such a degree, that, instead of ninety-four millions, one hundred and forty-one were expended. The deficit for the year 1716 was ninety-seven millions, owing to a delay in the recovery of the taxes of thirty-two millions.[2] Contrary to the resolutions so pompously announced, loans, advances, and the deplorable profit on the coin, made up the difference.

Salvation by economy was thus demonstrated to be impossible. Noailles, however, was still unwilling to yield to evidence. He con-

[1] Forbonnais, t. II. p. 431; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 118; Bailli, t. II. p. 61; Dangeau, t. III. p. 404.

[2] Bailli, t. II. p. 70.

Digitized by Google

tinued to struggle.[1] He caused a declaration to be rendered, January 30, 1717, making a proportional reduction of all pensions, except the smallest. According to all appearances, this was executed only towards men without credit. June 27, 1717, he presented to the Council of the Regency a report on the state of the finances, prepared, doubtless, with the co-operation of the brothers Pâris. Its principles were, for the most part, of luminous justice. It pronounced a sound judgment on the past administrations since Sulli. It affirmed that the worst of resources is that of burdening the public revenue, or of abandoning private citizens to the tyranny of revenue-farmers by *extraordinary transactions;* that, even in time of war, the increase of expenditures ought to be covered only by the increase of taxes; that if, nevertheless, it should be absolutely impossible to increase the taxes, the money should be borrowed, to be repaid within a given time; and recourse should never be had to extraordinary transactions. This official document set forth, with an energy which no pamphleteer could have surpassed, the iniquity of those exactions which fell by turns on a multitude of individuals or corporations, from whom was demanded, under vain pretexts, and without granting them a hearing, not a portion of their revenue, but a portion of their capital, often to their utter ruin.[2] Noailles showed, in this, one of the principal causes of our financial inferiority compared with other States (England and Holland) where taxation fell heavily but equally in critical times, and on the revenue of all, instead of on the capital of certain citizens, so that

[1] Terrified, however, he counselled the Regent to convoke the States-General, which he had dissuaded him from doing in September, 1715. Saint-Simon, in his turn, lately so warm a partisan of the States-General, dissuaded the Regent from it. It was too late, according to him, and the situation was too complicated. He feared in the States, he said, "the excess of liberty now so much in fashion." — T. XIV. chap. 31, and t. XV. chap. 1. Public opinion thus already exceeded Saint-Simon, much more monarchical than his reputation. What he desired was simply a monarchy governed by ministers who were dukes and peers, instead of by citizen ministers.

[2] See in Forbonnais, t. II. p. 511, the examples cited by the report, — arbitrary taxes, with joint responsibility, on certain categories of subaltern officers; dismemberment of offices, in order to force the holder to redeem two or three times the portions of the revenue that were taken from him; investigations into the origin of estates possessed without dispute for a century perhaps; and enormous taxes imposed on property-holders, under pretext of legitimizing a possession very legitimate, etc.; the spoils of such or such a category of citizens given to a courtier or to a beautiful lady, who hastened to sell them to a revenue-farmer. Our mind refuses to reconcile these individual extortions, resembling those of the grossest despots of Asia or Africa, with the brilliant civilization of the seventeenth century: such contrasts, however, are essential to absolute monarchy.

Digitized by Google

all were burdened and relieved at the same time. He also cited, among the causes of public ruin, the arbitrary villain-tax, which should be replaced by the proportional villain-tax by means of a valuation of property, and the existing ignorance with respect to exchange. In this he was in advance of Colbert himself. He saw clearly that the prohibition to export precious metals only served to raise exchange to the disadvantage of France, and that we would still be obliged in the end to pay our debts abroad in specie if the balance were against us. Lastly, and this was what was most honorable in him, he boldly pointed out the disastrous consequences that had ensued to our commerce and manufactures from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He maintained that France, well administered, might double her population, and triple her commerce.

A truly profound maxim on financiers should also be cited, — a maxim which has unceasingly furnished food for meditation to politicians; namely, that those who suppose that there is sometimes need of the credit and advances of revenue-farmers are deluded: *they have no credit of themselves;* and that which they enjoy is founded only on the public business which they turn to their profit.

Almost all of this exposition of principles was a masterpiece; but as soon as the author came to the means of attaining the end, that is, of reanimating confidence and circulation, the figures became illusory. He compared the situation of 1717 with that of 1715, and showed the net revenue raised, by the increase of revenue-farms and despite the abatement of taxes, from sixty-nine to eighty-six millions: the expenditure was to be only ninety-three millions; and a deficit of only seven millions was to remain at the end of the year. The floating debt was reduced from seven hundred and eighty-nine to three hundred and forty-three millions; and he relied also on the arrears of the Chamber of Justice to acquit part of this. This was quite as chimerical as the estimate of the expenditure at ninety-three millions.[1]

Noailles, nevertheless, pursued his plans. He obtained, in August, 1717, the publication of an edict which abolished the income-tax[2] on real estate, while maintaining it on salaries and pensions. The people of the south, instigated by the landed aristocracy, were beginning to refuse to pay it, protesting that the late

[1] Forbonnais, t. II. p. 463.

[2] It produced then only about fifteen millions: it was very necessary to moderate this tax, which came after so many others.

Digitized by Google

King had promised to abolish it on the recurrence of peace. To compensate for this loss, the edict abolished the greater part of the exemptions from aids (excise-duties) and salt-taxes, and announced that the projected economy was accomplished. It set forth the means adopted "to remove the kind of general embarrassment caused by the notes of the State and those of the receivers-general in the movement and circulation of specie:" these were lotteries, creations of life-*rentes* at six and a quarter per cent, alienations of what were called the *small domains*, the whole offered as investments to the holders of notes, and finally the establishment of *commercial companies*, the shares of which were to be purchasable in notes. These *companies* were not the work of Noailles, but pertained to a rival system that was growing daily. What really belonged to Noailles and his counsellors was the attempt to substitute the proportional villain-tax for the arbitrary villain-tax, for which he had caused preparatory investigations to be made in the generality of Paris. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre and the Count de Boulainvilliers had presented remarkable memorials on this subject.[1] A first attempt was made at Lisieux by decree of the council, December 27, 1717. The *maires* and *échevins* were commissioned to estimate the landed and industrial incomes of private citizens and corporations. The inhabitants welcomed this innovation by bonfires. All the neighboring towns claimed the same favor. It was not the same in the country districts, where a very bad regulation was made, which joined to a real-estate villain-tax complicated taxes on cattle and other products of the farmer's industry, and which farmed out these villain-taxes and imposts. The evil might have been easily repaired, and the enterprise pursued: it was found more convenient to renounce it, and to fall back into the beaten track.[2]

The responsibility of this is not to be imputed to Noailles. He was no longer in the ministry when this reform proved abortive. His designs could have had no chance of succeeding except by dint of patience, firmness, order, and perseverance; qualities of which the head of the government was absolutely destitute, and which he himself was far from possessing in a sufficient degree.

[1] *Projet de taille proportionelle* by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, 1717; *Mém.* of Boulainvilliers, 1727; Saint-Simon, t. XV. p. 373; t. XVII. p. 399.

[2] It was wished to attempt also, shortly afterward, the Royal tithe of Vauban. The illustrious engineer, Petit-Renau, who devoted his last years, as Vauban had done, to researches for the public good, charged himself with superintending the attempts, *at his own expense*, in some elections. All this resulted in nothing under a government incapable of perseverance in well-doing.

Digitized by Google

He demanded fifteen years of excessive economy from a hand-to-mouth administration, a fickle and prodigal Regent, and an infant King! Another, however, promised to make unknown wealth gush forth from the very midst of ruin, to transform into an instrument of activity and prosperity that bulky mass of discredited paper which obstructed circulation, to liberate the King while decupling the commercial power of the country. He asked no sacrifice for so many marvels, — nothing but to confide boldly in his genius, already proved by a first success during the last two years. After a whole year's struggle, the Regent decided. Noailles, feeling the rudder escaping from his hands, abdicated the presidency of the Council of Finance. D'Aguesseau, his friend, who had been raised to the dignity of chancellor at the death of Voisin, February, 1717, was divested of the seals, and exiled to his estate of Fresnes, in the fear that he might favor the anticipated opposition of the parliament to the innovations that were contemplated. The seals and the presidency of the Council of Finance were united in the hands of the lieutenant of police, D'Argenson, an able, active, and intrepid man, a stranger to the prejudices and opinions of the legal profession, and essentially fitted for *coups d'état*.[1] D'Argenson was to be only the arm: the head was JOHN LAW, who, excluded from public functions, less as a foreigner than as a Protestant, was to conduct every thing without title and without rank. Thus was inaugurated the SYSTEM (end of January, 1718).

Noailles, after all his partial bankruptcies, still left the annual consolidated debt at seventy-three millions, on a capital of one billion eight hundred and twenty-five millions, without counting the three hundred and forty-three millions of floating debt bearing thirteen millions interest. His estimated expenditure for 1718, the debt excepted, was reduced to sixty-five millions! It was a despairing adieu that was akin to satire. No attention was paid to it; and the government and the public, absorbed in unbounded hopes, speedily forgot this administration, which had always talked well, acted sometimes well and sometimes ill, discussed many things, and left numerous admirable preambles and some useful reforms.

The conqueror of Noailles had commenced his work and laid the foundations of his edifice under Noailles himself.

What were the origin, character, and aim of that enterprise

[1] D'Argenson had been the organizer of that higher political police which enveloped France in an invisible net: his predecessor La Reinie had created only the civil police. D'Argenson raised his lieutenant-generalship to the importance of a ministry. The police became the chief machinery of the degenerated monarchy.

Digitized by Google

styled *the System*, as being the theory *par excellence*, the radical antithesis of stereotyped and traditional finance, — as founding an administration of a wholly novel nature, which would deduce all its acts, as metaphysicians deduce their thoughts, from a general idea?

The author of this extraordinary attempt, John Law,[1] was a child of Scotland (a Campbell, by his mother), sprung from a people at once active and meditative, and more given to speculations and general ideas than the English people. The son of a rich goldsmith of Edinburgh, handsome, witty, sparkling with grace and eloquence, full of charm and fascination, he was hurried away at first by the vivacity of his imagination into all the errors of a tempestuous youth. Women and play disputed his ardent nature. Condemned to death for a duel at London, he escaped, and fled to Holland. At the moment when the passions seemed to have full possession of him, his mind, however, was already awakened to other objects: familiarized from childhood to the operations in exchange and discount practised by goldsmiths, the creation of the Bank of England (in 1694) had made a vivid impression on him.[2] He found another bank at Amsterdam, and studied its mechanism. He felt that the passion for play in him was only the passion for combinations and for the calculation of chances. His bent was found: he knew himself thenceforth. He went to Italy to pursue his studies on commerce and credit, while continuing a life of dissipation: his fiery organization sufficed for every thing. Play, which had ruined him, retrieved his fortune, — he had made it a veritable science; bets, already so much in vogue in England and elsewhere, and speculations in the public funds of all Europe, were not less advantageous to him; but wealth was to him only a means of action. In that sphere of economic interests, in which most of his contemporaries, those especially who governed the rest, saw nothing but isolated facts, and conducted themselves on no general principles, he believed that he had discovered an unknown truth, a law capable of transforming society; and the ambition of a part as new as brilliant, of a glory superior to that of politicians, had taken possession of him. He aspired to apply, as he says in his own words,[3] the philosophic method, the principles, of Descartes to social economy, hitherto abandoned to chance and empiricism.

[1] Pronounced *Lass*. Saint-Simon pretends to see in it a play on words, *l'as*.

[2] Born in 1671, he was then twenty-three years old.

[3] Law's Works, ap. *Économistes financiers du dix-huitième siècle*, pp. 654–671.

Digitized by Google

In the primitive ages, commerce was only the exchange of merchandise in kind. A second phase then appeared, — the exchange of merchandise through the medium of another more convenient and more portable kind of merchandise, which served as a universal standard, and which was a representative value of other values, a pledge equivalent to the object which it represented. Law believed that he foresaw the advent of a third period, the exchange of merchandise through the medium of a purely conventional token without value in itself, much lighter, more portable, easier to transport, than gold itself. Celerity, facility, necessity even, had already led private individuals to substitute paper for specie in commercial intercourse (letters of exchange, drafts, etc.),[1] so that paper represented metallic currency as the latter represented merchandise; with this difference, that paper is not a *pledge*, but a simple *promise* which constitutes CREDIT. The State, thought Law, should generalize systematically what is done instinctively among private individuals, and should do what private individuals cannot do; that is, create money by imprinting the bill of exchange with the stamp of public authority. Money is the basis of commerce. To multiply money is to multiply commerce. The precious metals cannot be multiplied at pleasure: it is necessary to buy them of the owners of the mines. Paper can be multiplied at pleasure by the State in proportion to its needs; and the quantity of money can thus always be made equal approximately to the demand. Every emission of paper, by increasing the money of the nation, will increase its commerce, wealth, and power. The consequences of this innovation will be not only the increase of the general wealth of the country, but an internal revolution in society: the high interest on money proceeding from its scarcity, the multiplication of money will lessen usury, and rescue the State and private individuals from the impositions of the monopolizers of specie.

The financial organization of the State is false: the State takes, and does not restore; borrows, and does not lend; consumes, and does not produce. The State should assume an entirely new form. It should give credit, and not receive it: it should become

[1] It is to be remarked that France was even more advanced on this point than England, which knew nothing more of bills at sight than of special boards of trade.

[2] "If a currency be established that shall have no intrinsic value, or the intrinsic value of which shall be such that it will not be sought to export it, and that the supply will never be below the demand in the country, wealth and power will be attained. The value of every thing is regulated according to the proportion between the supply and the demand." — Law, ap. *Économistes financiers*, p. 590.

Digitized by Google

a banker. The public treasury should be transformed into a bank of deposit and discount, emitting paper-money as a legal tender, at least so far as the relations between the State and private individuals are concerned (the State has the right to do this, provided that it has properties of real value behind the notes, corresponding to their nominal value). The bank should collect the public revenues, and attract the money of private individuals in the form of a deposit: it should be to the community what the heart is to the human body, — the centre and organ of circulation. The credit which the State would thus take away from the usurers, it would lend, by means of discount, to private individuals; and the poor and intelligent man could obtain, on moderate conditions, the means of labor which are refused him, or sold to him on burdensome conditions.

This is not all: the State should not only be a banker; it should be a merchant. It should direct the employment of the new resources which it would create by the formation of a General Commercial Company, "into which all the commercial paper of the kingdom should fall successively, to form but one body." The company should be closely connected with the bank; and the whole nation should become a body of traders, whose common treasury should be the State Bank. All peoples have believed, in all times, that commerce, even when exercised by private individuals, with their limited resources and divided interests, constitutes the greatest wealth of a State: what would it be with a State carrying on commerce as a body with all its strength,[1] and "having no longer to dread the obstacles produced by the opposition of interests, so apt to diminish or destroy the best business"?

The summing-up of this gigantic plan is the redemption of the public debt in stock of the general company, identified with the State, and, in the future, the abolition of taxes; the State subsisting on the discounts of the bank and the share of the treasury in the profits of the company, and providing for the public service by that portion of the funds deposited in the bank exceeding the reserve necessary for ordinary transactions.

So vast and bold a conception would merit all our interest, even if it were nothing more to us than an object of historical study; but it is much more. The ideas of Law concerning paper-money,

[1] Law does not intend, however, to interdict commerce to private individuals, or to force them to enter the company; but he thinks that they would come into it spontaneously, and that competition would vanish of itself.

Digitized by Google

the interest of money,[1] and many other things, are living and vibrating among us. His theory is the starting-point of a great economic and social school, — of that unitary school, whose most exclusive votaries, logically carrying their ideas to the furthest deductions, end in the absorption of the individual by society, and in universal communism. The unitary idea, a moment in power with Law, then mingled confusedly in the great liberal and individualistic current of the eighteenth century, which precipitated itself in an inverse direction, and which swept it away without swallowing it up, reappeared in the warring factions of the Revolution: it then resumed the scientific character of its origin, enlarged its limits to introduce therein, with political economy, all the other phases of social life, and founded, in the nineteenth century, sects, then new parties, whose doctrines will long continue to be the subject of stormy debates. The most daring spirits of this school have not failed to claim and glorify their father in the Scotch reformer; although Law, as it happens to inventors, did not, doubtless, perceive the full scope of his system, and would not probably have accepted all that might be deduced from it.

This is not the place to discuss the unitary idea in general, much less the outgrowths, so diverse, that have arisen from it: we will confine ourselves to recalling the axiom, that every doc-

[1] Law condemns the loan at interest of capital redeemable at a fixed time, as is practised to-day legally, and as was practised at that time, in spite of the laws which forbade it through deference towards canonical law. He condemns still more strongly the constitution of *rentes*, that is, the alienation, with perpetual interest, on real-estate mortgage, of non-redeemable capital, an untoward invention by which Catholic countries evaded the prohibitions of the Church against interest, and which was much more onerous to commerce and manufactures than the ordinary loan at interest. He admits as legitimate only "commandité" (or partnership in which the acting partners are responsible without limitation, the dormant ones to the extent of their capital only), the commercial loan, with the sharing of profits and losses. A loan, according to him, should be either a gratuitous service, or a business into which the contracting parties put, the one his capital, the other his labor, and run the risk together. He seeks, in the question of law, a point of support for the project of organizing commercially the entire community. He qualifies, as usury, "every loan, which, under the appearance of a benefit, puts the benefactor more at his ease, and leads to the loss of the borrower, whom it is necessary to relieve" (p. 631). At the same time, he does not believe that it is possible to combat usury effectively by the penal law, and expects its destruction only from the *System*. The association of active and sleeping partners is commonly the form of loan most advantageous to commercial and industrial progress: nevertheless, the borrower does not always prefer it to the loan at interest, — an agreement quite as legitimate as any other, whatever Law may say. During Law's *System*, the Jansenists published, under the auspices of Cardinal de Noailles, a book against loans at interest and the sale of public funds. Bossuet had equally written against loans at interest. The Jesuits, according to their spirit of compromise with worldly necessities, were more accommodating

Digitized by Google

trine which does not associate the two principles of individuality and unity, of liberty and order,[1] is an incomplete doctrine, and consequently false. As to the special system of Law, some observations are necessary. The development of *credit*, the substitution, on a large scale, of the sign-promise for the sign-pledge and value, that is, of *trust* for immediate payment, was an excellent idea, but on condition of not going to extremes. *Trust* and *liberty* are synonymous: trust is not *decreed*. No one can constrain me to take a promise for the thing promised itself, if I do not believe in the promise. Paper, which is almost valueless, cannot therefore fill the part of the precious metals: it can only represent them by voluntary agreement. The State cannot create value, that is, make something out of nothing, any more than private individuals:[2] it substantiates existing values; if it abruptly and arbitrarily changes the relations of these values by changing the nominal value of the metallic currency, it does an iniquitous and absurd thing, as Law himself clearly demonstrates in a memorial of 1715. When the State creates paper-money, it creates the sign of real estate or other values which the paper represents: it does not create a new value. The idea that the State creates value is a fallacy of the legists of the Middle Ages: it is by this sophism that they justified the *royal counterfeiters*, Philippe the Fair and his imitators.

Paper being unable to be the equivalent of specie, its compulsory currency is therefore a violation of economic laws: if this violation may be salutary in certain cases, it is like all those measures of public safety which violate certain laws in the name of higher laws; it is economy yielding to policy;[3] it is obsidional currency; it is the *assignat* imposed as a sign of solidarity on all the children of the country in danger. These are heroic remedies, which we renounce as soon as we return to a normal state, and which are weapons of war, and not instruments of reform.

Now, is it true that the multiplication of the representative sign multiplies the social wealth? — It aids it indirectly but powerfully by aiding circulation, provided that the emission is in proportion to the needs. If the emission abruptly and indefinitely

[1] We mean, by order, harmony, the *coördination* of free existences.

[2] Law does not say precisely that the State can create value, but that it can create money. He acknowledges that true value, "power and wealth, consist in the extent of the population and in the warehouses of merchandise" (Considerations on Money). Neither does he, in theory, absolutely preach compulsory currency.

[3] England maintained compulsory currency during our great wars, and until 1819.

Digitized by Google

exceeds the needs, it will only increase the nominal values of all merchandise, and disturb commerce instead of serving it. Law did not disregard this truth in theory: we shall directly see it in practice. As to his definition, that "money is the basis of commerce," it is false: money is only the agent of commerce. The basis of commerce is capital; that is, the excess of the production over the immediate and local consumption.

The compulsory currency of paper, moreover, would not have been necessary if the project of the Bank and the General Company had been completely realized. In an association of this kind, every member must receive the paper emitted by the society. Now, the whole nation, the whole State, being associated, the paper would naturally therefore be current everywhere. This idea of a nation working as a single man fascinates the imagination, but appalls the reason. Suppose that individual liberty, the principle of all progress, could preserve its play in such a mechanism, what hands could ever be strong enough and wise enough to regulate all the movements of this colossal machine? The first part of the system, the State a banker, appalls us less than the system complete. The idea of the State as a regulator and distributer of credit has many more partisans than that of the State as a merchant and producer. Here again, however, there is evident peril if the bank becomes purely administrative, and if the activity, vigilance, and economic prudence of individual interest are not associated, under some form, in the distribution of credit, with the great order and majestic regularity of the State. As to the total substitution of the profits of the State Bank for taxation, it is, even at the present day, the idea of some theorists; but, apart from the vastness of such an experiment, there is again found in it the danger of changing the nature of things. Credit become the sole pivot of the body politic, society absorbed by a single one of the social forces,—is not this that perpetual abuse of exclusive ideas which artificially reduces the variety of things to a single element? There is, in *direct* taxation, that sacrifice made by the citizen to the State, and which is connected with other sacrifices of a higher nature, such as military service, a moral character which society should not ignore.

There is, lastly, an insurmountable *de facto* objection to oppose to the system of Law; namely, that, under an absolute monarchy, it is impossible to guarantee that the government will not encroach upon the reserve-fund of the bank, and that it will not exaggerate the emissions of notes to satisfy the necessities or

Digitized by Google

fancies of the moment. Law foresaw the objection, and strove to refute it by proving that a government that would act in this manner would tread under foot its true interests, despoil itself, and madly sacrifice the future to the present. Facts were about to show what this argument was worth.

We must now behold the theorist at work.

This bold genius once in possession of his doctrine, he thought only of applying it; sure, as he believed himself, of giving wealth and preponderance to the country that should adopt it. He commenced with his own country. In 1705, informed that Scotland, after a first unsatisfactory attempt, wished to make a new trial at banking, he presented a memorial to the Scottish Parliament, under the title of "Money and Trade Considered." In this he proposed a State Bank, the paper of which should be made a legal tender, and should be guaranteed by a landed mortgage.[1] His plan was not accepted. He did not hesitate to carry it elsewhere, unrestrained by any scruples. He had that cosmopolitan spirit which was destined to reign in France during the longest phase of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and to reappear among the greater part of the successors of Law in the nineteenth century. Repulsed in England as in Scotland, England contenting herself with her Bank of Circulation, he set about roving over Europe, playing everywhere, winning everywhere, talking of finance and credit everywhere to statesmen. In 1708 he proposed a Royal Bank to Chamillart, who was in the last extremity, and introduced himself to the Duke of Orleans and the Prince de Conti. He was sent away from Paris, as too successful a player, by the lieutenant of police, D'Argenson, who took the science of combinations for improbity: it is known how unscrupulous the courtiers of the Great King had been at play.[2] He was not discouraged, and sent memorials from Genoa to the Prince de Conti against the monetary subversions by which a deplorable administration was achieving the ruin of commerce. The memorials fell into the hands of Chamillart's successor, Desmaretz, who, nevertheless, continued the variations in the value of the coin.

[1] He acknowledges in this memorial that "credit is a voluntary thing" (p. 492): then why compulsory currency? He seems also to comprehend that there are operations which can only succeed in countries without foreign relations (p. 499). We see from this memorial that money was at from three to four per cent in Holland, at six in Scotland, and that it had been at three and even at two in Genoa, which absorbed an enormous share of the Spanish specie.

[2] Saint-Simon relates that the Duke d'Antin was caught with his hand in the bag by the Duke of Orleans, the father of the Regent.

Digitized by Google

Law, meanwhile, carried his plans to a little State, Savoy; then to the Emperor: he was not listened to. Nevertheless, an attempt was made at Vienna which presented some partial resemblance to his principles. On the recurrence of peace, he returned to France, and finally obtained access to Desmaretz, who was struck with his theories of credit, and who approved the plan of a bank on a large scale.[1] Law offered five hundred thousand francs for the poor if he failed. The death of Louis XIV. seemed to him destined to hasten his success. He transported all his fortune to France (one million six hundred thousand francs, at twenty-eight francs per mark), as if to burn his ships; and presented to the Regent a memorial on money, of which we have already spoken, and some very excellent memorials on banks. He showed France, as concerned credit, behind all nations, even Rome, Naples, and Vienna, which possessed banks: France, Spain, and Portugal were the only nations that had none! France was becoming weaker, while the other States were increasing in strength.[2] England was sustained by credit: she was paying six per cent on her debt without distinguishing between her first creditors and those who had bought her stock at forty and fifty per cent in the worst times. France had arbitrarily reduced her earliest creditors to four per cent, the others to much less: yet despite this, or rather on account of it, England was prospering, and supporting, without bending, a burden of sixty millions of annual debt, that formerly would have crushed her; while France, on the contrary, was overwhelmed by the embarrassment of her finances. The worst paper in England did not lose five per cent: the best in France lost fifty per cent. He concluded by proposing, no longer a bank guaranteed by mortgage, as in Scotland, but a Royal Bank that should collect the public revenues, emitting notes which should be a legal tender in payments between the King and private individuals, but not in commerce and the relations of private individuals among themselves. "If credit is compulsory," he said, "it will do harm instead of doing good."[3] To prevent all distrust, the notes were to be redeemable at sight in bank crowns, which were always to be of the same weight and denomination, and were not to be subject to any possible change in the value of the coin. The notes payable in unvarying specie would

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 296.

[2] Among the causes of decline, he cites the extreme increase of luxury and expenditure, and the great inequality of property (p. 604).

[3] P. 638.

Digitized by Google

establish the credit annihilated by the state-notes, which were a legal tender, and which had no guarantee. He assured the Regent that his Regency, well employed, could suffice to raise the population of France to thirty million souls, the revenue of the nation to three thousand millions annually, and that of the King to three hundred millions. He offered, not only his fortune, but his head, as a guarantee of success.

We see that the System in these memorials was presented with wise reservations, and with the recognition of the true principle of credit, liberty.

The Regent, an irresolute innovator, paused before the opposition of Noailles and the Council of Finance. Law was only authorized to establish a private bank, by partnership, on a plan more restricted than that accepted by Desmaretz. May 2, 1716, letters-patent granted to Law, for twenty years, the privilege of a bank of deposit and discount, with power to administer the funds of merchants by means of bank clearings, but not to carry on trade or to contract loans: its notes were to be payable at sight, and in unvarying bank specie of the weight and denomination at the day of the establishment. The capital of the bank was fixed at six millions francs, divided into twelve hundred shares, to be paid, one-fourth in specie, and three-fourths in state-notes, which were losing about seventy per cent: this reduced the effective capital nearly one-half. An inspector of the King superintended the operations and indorsed the notes. The amount of the emission was not fixed; only the whole emission was to be effected at one time, when the necessary sum was decided upon. The Regent accepted the title of Protector of the Bank.

The success of this institution, despite the mediocrity of its capital, surpassed all hopes. The usurers, the revenue-farmers, the most ignorant men, had at first derided it: they soon trembled, and acknowledged in it an enemy more formidable than the Chamber of Justice. The harm done by the last recoinage of specie was promptly repaired; the interest on money fell, despite the commotion caused by the Chamber of Justice; foreign exchange rose in favor of France; external commerce and manufactures revived: France seemed a body in which the long-disturbed circulation of blood was reëstablished.[1]

It may be regretted that Law did not content himself with perfecting and enlarging this successful creation:[2] it was all that

[1] Forbonnais, t. II. p. 401; Saint-Simon, t. XV. p. 7.

[2] The deputies of the commercial towns, consulted by the Council of Finance, had

Digitized by Google

could be done with safety under such a form of government. But Law saw in his first victory only a means of recurring to his great projects. April 10, 1717, he obtained a royal declaration, ordering all public accountants to receive the notes of the bank in payment of taxes, and to redeem the notes at sight in specie without discount. This was an excellent measure, but a first step towards the State Bank. September 12, 1717, the public accountants at Paris were constrained to receive and make their payments in bank-notes. In the month of December, the Regent presided in person over the meeting of the shareholders of the bank, which declared a dividend of seven and a half per cent for a single half-year: it was something new in French customs to see the head of the State presiding over the operations of a company of brokers and discounters!

Law had made, before, a new and most important step. The celebrated financier and merchant, Crozat, prosecuted by the Chamber of Justice, had extricated himself from the affair by renouncing the monopoly of the trade of Louisiana, which had been granted him by Desmaretz in 1712, on condition of continuing there the colonization imperfectly begun by D'Iberville.[1] The Council of Finance offered Law the privilege abandoned by Crozat, provided that he would found a company that would expend two millions in colonization. Noailles, whom the influence of Law began to disquiet more and more, hoped to draw him into a ruinous affair, and little suspected that he was offering him the ardently desired lever of his system. Law hastened to accept Louisiana, convoked the leading capitalists, and carried them away by the picture of the vast agricultural and commercial future in store for those new lands, those virgin forests, bathed by a river a thousand leagues in extent, if capital and labor were carried there in sufficient quantity. The company was formed at his voice, not with two millions, but with one hundred millions, of nominal capital, divided into two hundred thousand shares at five hundred francs each, payable in state-notes, bearing interest at four per cent, which represented thirty millions in specie. As the price of the advantage offered to the government by the absorption of the state-notes, the new Western Company obtained the monopoly of the

unanimously answered that nothing could be more advantageous to France than a State Bank, but that the juncture was not favorable. — See the preamble to the letters-patent of May 2, 1716, ap. *Hist. du Système des Finances en* 1719–1720, t. V. p. 74.

[1] See the Age of Louis XIV. vol. I. p. 492. After the Peace of Ryswick, a colony had been sent to Louisiana; but the War of the Succession had arrested its progress.

Digitized by Google

commerce of Louisiana and of the Canada beaver-trade for twenty-five years, and the proprietorship of the soil of Louisiana forever, with the reservation of the rights of the few colonists already settled. The royal edict decreed that the local laws of Paris should be the law of Louisiana. The colony was exempted from taxation for twenty-five years; and important exemptions from duties were granted to the company, on its commodities, merchandise, building materials, etc. (August, 1717).

Law had his two great instruments in his hands, the Bank and the Company of Commerce: the question now was to make them attain their full power by rendering the bank royal and the company universal.

The council, urged by Noailles, wished to rid the State immediately of a hundred millions of its notes by forcing the holders to exchange them for the stock of the Western Company. Law protested warmly against this constraint. The smothered contest broke out between him and Noailles, who had seen his rival grow by degrees above his head. Noailles fell, as we have said; D'Argenson replaced him, and Law, victorious, pursued his work.

Every thing had been clear and logical hitherto in the operations of Law. At the moment that he arrived at power, strange contradictions began to manifest themselves. No one had demonstrated so well as he the deplorable consequences of monetary subversions; yet, only a few months after the fall of his rival (the end of May, 1718), a decree of recoinage appeared, which raised the silver mark from forty to sixty livres. Private individuals, indeed, were authorized to add, to the specie which they carried to the mint, two-fifths, over and above, in state-notes, the whole to be reimbursed to them in the new coin; but, through the effect of the rise in price, they found that they gave their state-notes for nothing, and lost one-fifteenth of the value of their specie. Those who had no state-notes to add to their specie lost much more. Is it really to Law that this fraudulent scheme is to be imputed? His adversaries have sought to see in it the manifestation of his inmost thought, a first blow dealt to metallic currency in favor of paper-money: this abrupt and violent measure seems little in conformity with his manner of proceeding, which was by no means devoid of prudence. His partisans have justified it by reasons at least specious, proving that the substitution of D'Argenson for Noailles had only given him a secret instead of a patent rival, and a rival equally formidable through the crafty

Digitized by Google

dexterity of his mind and the persevering vigor of his character. In Law, on the contrary, the moral energy was not on a level with the intellect: this man, so strong and impassioned in conception, so persuasive in the exposition of his idea, was feeble in execution, submitted to concessions and compromises which changed the nature of his plans, and had by no means the inflexibility necessary to great innovators. D'Argenson, doubtless, set forth the urgent necessities of the State, which the bank and the company could not immediately extricate from embarrassment; and the Regent found this method of gratuitously liquidating so large a part of the floating debt, and buying up a great part of the specie of the kingdom, very convenient.

The edict of recoinage was registered in the Court of Coinage to avoid the intervention of the parliament. The good understanding between the Regent and this great body had not been of long duration. The parliament, so long mute and powerless, indemnified itself for half a century's silence by a feverish activity and an inundation of encroaching pretensions. It had quickly forgotten its gratitude to the prince who had restored to it the so much regretted right of remonstrance. At the procession of the vow of Louis XIII., August 15, 1716, the parliament had claimed the right of precedence over all others than the king; and the Regent had had the weakness to elude the discussion by abstaining from appearing in the procession. The *Mémoires* of Retz, which had just been published, were turning the brain of every one; the sons of the revenue-farmers, who filled to overflowing the benches of the Court of Inquiries (*Cour des Enquêtes*), were imbittered by the persecutions which had fallen upon their fathers: the old magistrates, the men of parliamentary tradition, saw with terror the beginning of a revolution which threatened to dethrone the Palais in favor of the counting-house. Many internal dissensions had already occurred. The occasion of the new recoinage was seized upon. The parliament summoned the other superior courts of Paris to unite with it, as at the time of the Fronde: the other courts refused. It was not discouraged. It addressed warm and too well founded remonstrances *to the King:* it received a harsh response. June 20, 1718, it broke forth by a decree of singular audacity, which, after prescribing the renewal of remonstrances, suspended the execution of the edict of recoinage "until it should please the King to decide in favor of the remonstrances." The decree of the parliament was instantly annulled by a decree of the council.

Digitized by Google

The Chamber of Accounts and the Court of Aids, although they had not consented to unite with the parliament, also supported it by presenting their remonstrances (June 30).

The month of July was passed in parleying. The edict was executed, and the administration did not yield; but the Regent would have gladly avoided extremities. The situation was very complicated. The opposition of the parliament was linked with other cabals. The provincial parliaments were turbulent like the parliament of Paris; the nobles were restless like the lawyers; the nobility of Brittany, dissatisfied with the governor of the province, had persuaded the States to refuse the gratuity the year before, and appeared no better disposed in the session of 1718. They talked of nothing but of reclaiming their privileges of the time of their ancient dukes. The spirit of agitation and enterprise existed everywhere. The enemies of Philippe of Orleans, within and without, adroitly fomented the discontent with a Regency that had promised so much, and, thus far, had performed so little. The nocturnal orgies of the Palais-Royal, that Caprea which the Regent had made for himself in the midst of Paris, were turned to his disadvantage at a distance, in the provinces: the rumors of incest, not only with the Duchess of Berry, but also with the other daughters of Philippe, recurred with new force.[1] The aged Villeroi, the governor of Louis XV., revived the suspicions of 1712 by the malignantly exaggerated precautions with which he surrounded the young King. The agents of the King of Spain, who, before the death of Louis XIV., had entertained the thought of disputing the Regency with the Duke of Orleans, and who was on very unfriendly diplomatic terms with the Regent, had a secret understanding with the coterie of the Du Maines, who had to avenge, besides the affront of 1715, another more recent affront, — the wresting of the right of succession to the throne from the legitimized princes. From all these movements, there was reason to believe that another Fronde was about to appear.[2]

[1] Lémontei, in the *Revue rétrospective*, has justified the Regent with respect to Mademoiselle de Valois; but, as to the Duchess of Berry, there will always remain a doubt which is in itself a terrible condemnation.

[2] These movements had begun by the ridiculous affair of the *cap*, which, already entered into at the close of the reign of Louis XIV., had enlarged, and made a great noise in the beginning of the Regency. The dukes and peers claimed that, when they sat in parliament, the first president must remove his cap on taking their voice: they wished, moreover, to recover their ancient prerogative of speaking before the presidents *à mortier*. The contest was a warm one; and Saint-Simon was the Achilles of this burlesque Iliad, a tragic-comic episode of the old rivalry between the magisterial robe and the feudal sword. The parliamentarians employed other weapons than decrees.

Digitized by Google

The parliament, in fact, resumed the offensive by an act much bolder and more violent even than the decree of June 20: August 12, it rendered a decree which reduced the bank to its first foundation,

A pamphlet attributed to President de Novion probed the origin of those proud ducal houses that claimed the inheritance of the peers of Charlemagne and Hugh Capet, and endeavored to prove that the Crussols d'Uzès were descended from an apothecary; the Villerois, from a fish-merchant; the Rochefoucaulds, from butchers, etc.; the Saint-Simons at least were gentlemen by descent, the posterity of a country squire called the Sire de Rouvroi, and not of the Counts de Vermandois. This counterpart of D'Hozier and Father Anselm, a mixture of truth and falsehood, exasperated the dukes to such a degree, that they thought of proceeding to the Palais, and enforcing their pretensions, sword in hand. The Regent arrested the outbreak by deciding in favor of the request of the dukes by a decree of the council, May 21, 1716; but the parliament, in turn, inveighed in such a manner, that the Regent recoiled, revoked the order, and postponed the decision of the case until the majority of the King.

This quarrel was followed by a graver discussion. The princes of the branch of Condé, the Duke de Bourbon, the Count de Charolais, his brother, and the Prince de Conti, his cousin, presented a request to the council, August 22, 1716, that it should take away from the *legitimized* sons of the late King the right of succession to the throne, and the prerogatives of princes of the blood, which had been unduly conferred upon them. The Duke de Bourbon, a violent, brutal, and narrow-minded young man, did, through hatred of his aunt, Louise Bénédicte de Bourbon-Condé, Duchess du Maine, what the Regent had been unwilling to do through regard for his wife, the daughter of the late King and Madame de Montespan, like the *legitimized* princes. The dukes and peers, always in quest of occasions to appear in public as a body, interfered to demand, that, if the *legitimized* princes lost the rank of princes of the blood, precedence over other peers should also be taken from them, and they should be made to take rank according to the date of their peerages. The Duke du Maine, through weakness of character, and his brother, the Count de Toulouse, through a sort of philosophic indifference, let themselves be overthrown without much resistance; but the Duchess du Maine valiantly sustained the shock. This strange personage, who had, in the body of a dwarf, a mind of indefatigable turbulence and vivacity, quitted her amusements at Sceaux, where she was enthroned like a theatrical queen, in the midst of wits and comedians, to rush headlong into the polemic at the head of a battalion of jurisconsults and scholars, especially Jesuit scholars (Father Daniel's *History of France* had been composed in great part to favor by examples the claims of bastards to the right of succession). The numerous writings of both parties agreed in invoking the authority of the nation, as the sole judge of the succession to the throne. "The royal authority," says Lémontei (t. I. p. 171), "was represented therein as a deposit and a proxy; the monarchy, as a simple civil contract; and the nation, as the master and arbiter of its rights." Men were already far distant from the Great King and the *Politics of the Holy Scriptures!* Madame du Maine knew how to find allies and to arouse the jealousy of the untitled nobility against the dukes: numerous noblemen, in noisy meetings, signed a memorial against the pretensions of the dukes and peers to constitute a body separate from the nobility. A relative democracy and aristocracy were thus opposed to each other in the bosom of the aristocratic order. The Regent, disquieted, forbade the nobility to assemble and to draw up collective documents. Thirty-nine noblemen protested, maintaining that judgment on what regarded princes belonged only to the King after attaining majority, or to the States-General; the legitimized princes made a similar protest: the parliament received neither the one nor the other. Six of the leaders of the nobility were imprisoned in the Bastille for a few weeks. The Council of the Regency, July 2, 1717, disregarded the protests, decided the case

Digitized by Google

forbade the directors and employés of the bank to retain any of the royal funds, or to make any use of them on account of the bank, rendered all fiscal officers responsible for the funds which they might have converted into notes, and prohibited all foreigners, even those naturalized, from interfering directly or indirectly in the management of the royal funds, "under the penalties decreed by the ordinances." The parliament purely and simply took possession of the administration of finance. The rumor ran that the parliament intended to seize, judge, and hang Law on the spot; and Law, terrified, hastened to take refuge in the Palais-Royal. Saint-Simon, always inclined to believe in the marvellous, speaks very seriously of this project, which, doubtless, never was in earnest. The parliament of 1718 was not of the stature to strike a blow worthy of the *Sixteen* of the League.[1]

After this outbreak, nearly a fortnight passed without event; but it was the silence that precedes the battle. The parliament followed up its assault by divers measures which confirmed the decree of August 12. The Palais-Royal deliberated. The Regent, "brave in danger, timid in embarrassment,"[2] was angry, but hesitated: men of action and audacity almost forced him to act. Law, recovered from his terror, had found energetic auxiliaries, — D'Argenson, who detested the parliament, both through the instinct of despotism, and through rancor of long standing; the Abbé Dubois, the former preceptor of Philippe of Orleans, who had become a diplomatist and high in credit through the success of an important negotiation in England; Saint-Simon, always hostile to the members of the bar; the Duke de Bourbon, lastly, bound to the Regent by a new pension, and to the System by the profits which his gross rapacity hoped from it. A vigorous blow was resolved upon. August 26, the parliament was summoned to the

against the legitimized princes, and revoked the edicts of Louis XIV. in their favor: the honors of princes of the blood for life alone were left to them. The preambles of the edict are in the same spirit as the writings of the parties: the King is made to say therein, that, "if princes of the blood should become lacking, it would belong to the nation to repair this misfortune by the wisdom of its choice," and that the King is not "free to dispose of the crown."—*Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 146.

The Duchess of Maine exclaimed, it is said, that when one had once been declared eligible to succeed to the throne, rather than suffer this right to be wrested from him, he should kindle a general conflagration throughout the kingdom (Saint-Simon, t. XIV. p. 651). She did her best to make her words good.

[1] Saint-Simon, t. XVI. p. 434. The decrees of the council and parliament, declarations, letters-patent, etc., concerning the system, are collected in tomes V. and VI. of the *Histoire du Système des Finances*, etc. The Hague, 1739, 6 vols. 12mo.

[2] Lémontei.

Digitized by Google

Tuileries for a bed of justice: it came on foot through the streets, as on the day of the barricades of the Fronde; but the people did not stir. The Council of the Regency had been assembled the same morning. The legitimized princes, feeling the storm approaching, had quitted the session; and the council had acceded to all the wishes of the Regent. The infant King, whose presence was reputed necessary to render valid the acts which he did not understand, was brought thither. The keeper of the seals, D'Argenson, then read four royal declarations: the first rudely reproached the parliament for its abuse of His Majesty's favors, and signified to it that it might continue to present remonstrances against the ordinances addressed to it, provided that this were done within a week; but that afterwards, if the King ordered the registration, it would be necessary to obey without delay, otherwise the registration would be reputed accomplished. The parliament was forbidden to interfere in the administration of the finances, or to take cognizance of any affairs of State, unless His Majesty requested its advice. All decrees contrary to this were annulled, and were to be stricken from the registers of the parliament. The second declaration deprived the legitimized princes of precedence over the other peers. A third act, making an exception in favor of the Count de Toulouse, on account of "his zeal for the public good, and his services," continued to him, during his life, the privileges which he enjoyed. A fourth declaration transferred to the Duke de Bourbon the superintendence of the education of the King, which the Duke du Maine had hitherto possessed. The first president, De Mesmes, a covetous intriguer, who had one hand in the coffers of the Regent, and the other in the plots of the Duchess du Maine, attempted to remonstrate. The keeper of the seals gravely made a semblance of going to take orders from the King; then said, "The King wishes to be obeyed, and obeyed on the spot." The parliament bowed its head; and the Fronde of 1718 vanished in smoke. The next day, indeed, a protest against what had passed in the bed of justice was drawn up at the Palais; but the Regent caused the arrest of a president and two counsellors. The parliament demanded the liberty of the three captives, obtained it only after a long delay, and attempted nothing more of importance. It forbore to register any edict relative to the finances; but, according to the declaration of August 26, the edicts were reputed registered at the end of a week, and the registration was dispensed with.[1]

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 151.

Digitized by Google

This successful blow to a rival power was followed by an internal revolution in the government. The councils which had replaced the ministers had not answered the public expectation: by substituting in each branch of power eight or ten ministers for a single one, the abuses had been no less, while the dilatoriness, discord, and confusion had increased. A wholly fundamental distinction had not been made; namely, that if several heads are useful in planning, but a single hand is needed for execution. A curb might have been put on the arbitrariness of the ministers, without abolishing agents so indispensable. Public opinion had already turned against these councils, the objects of so great an infatuation; and the parliament itself had lately demanded their abolition. This abolition was decreed by the Council of the Regency, September 24; and the ministerial system was reëstablished almost as in the past. The Abbé Dubois, who had had the principal share in this,[1] gained thereby the ministry of foreign affairs. The Council of Finance alone was continued under a new form.

The fall of the councils was an important event: it was the miscarriage of an attempt to form in France a governing aristocracy; not a parliamentary and semi-republican aristocracy as in England, but a monarchical and administrative aristocracy as in Austria. "The nobility," says the Duke d'Antin in his Memoirs, "will not recover from it."[2]

At the moment of the fall of the councils, a smothered contest already existed among the conquerors of the parliament. D'Argenson, resuming the part of Noailles, and relying like him on the counsels of the brothers Pâris, thwarted Law, and raised up a formidable competition to the Western Company by creating a company of farmers-general, that took the farms at

[1] He styled the councils "the idolatrous object of the chimerical spirits of the former court" (Fénelon and his friends).

[2] Lémontei, t. I. p. 194. The Abbé de Saint-Pierre, who was distinguished neither for tact nor timeliness, had just published, precisely at that juncture, under the title of *Polysynodie*, an enthusiastic panegyric of government by councils (April, 1718). He treated therein so harshly what he styled the *viziership*, that is, the ministerial despotism of the preceding reign, that the relics of the old court, instigated from the recesses of Saint-Cyr by Madame de Maintenon, protested against it as an outrage to the memory of Louis XIV., and in some sort forced the French Academy to exclude the good abbé from its midst, which the Regent did not forbid. It is not without interest to remark, that the *Polysynodie*, or plurality of councils, as designed by Saint-Pierre, was less impracticable than that which had been attempted by the Regent; for Saint-Pierre admitted that ministers might be retained, the councils regulating and prescribing, the ministers executing. — See his *Annales politiques*, t. II. p. 432.

Digitized by Google

forty-eight and a half millions a year, and issued shares to the amount of one hundred millions, payable in state-notes (September).

It was impossible to go on in this manner. The Regency had added in three years the sum of one hundred and thirty millions to the debt of Louis XIV. Without speaking of the contingencies of war, at this moment imminent, the presumed expenditures of 1719 would still exceed the receipts twenty-four millions. It was necessary for the government either to quit the System, after having become so deeply involved in it, or unreservedly to abandon itself to it. The Regent, contrary to his custom, was decided; and it was Law himself that hesitated when Philippe offered to deliver France to him. Law appeared dimly to discern that his unitary tendencies had deluded him; that an arbitrary and corrupt government cannot be a government of credit; that his bank, secure in its operations so long as it was a private bank, would be exposed to every risk so soon as it became royal, as the government could draw upon it at discretion; and that the caprice of the moment would prevail, in such governments, over permanent interest. He wished to obtain guarantees, which would prove how wrong the parliament had been in treating him as an enemy: he proposed to the Regent to put the bank under the ægis of a private government, composed of members of the four superior courts of Paris: the Regent refused. He then proposed, instead of rendering the bank royal, to redeem nine hundred millions of the capital of the debt in paper-money emitted by the King. This expedient was rejected with reason.[1] Summoned to fulfil his promises, he resolved on his course, launched intrepidly on his career, and no longer looked back. D'Argenson yielded, to avoid being dismissed from the ministry; and, December 4, the bank was declared royal, with a clause providing that notes could only be emitted by decree of the council. The King redeemed the shares. Louis XIV. would have been stupefied, indeed, could he have seen the King, his successor, become a banker. The bank-notes ceased to be redeemable in invariable coin, and returned to the common condition in this respect. It was strange, that, at the moment when the bank was so greatly enlarged, it should have been deprived of the advantage which had rendered its success so rapid. It has been pretended[2] that Law himself, imbued

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 299, according to the MS. Memoirs of the Count de La Marck and the Duke d'Antin.

[2] Lémontei, t. I. p. 300.

Digitized by Google

with too just a distrust of the government, wished to postpone the complete execution of the System, and that it was in spite of him that redemption in invariable coin was soon reëstablished (April 22, 1719). The contrary is more probable: the declaration of April 22 reveals the thought and hand of Law.[1]

The great machine was in motion, and it no longer depended on Law to stop it. December 27, 1718, it was enacted that at Paris, and in four other cities where branches of the bank had been established, payments could no longer be made in silver, except of sums under six hundred francs: above this amount, it was necessary to pay in gold or notes. This was a first attack on the free circulation of specie, and the beginning of irregular and arbitrary measures. This one was in favor of the notes. Law labored at the same time, by expedients at first more legitimate, to cause the company's stock to rise in value. The hypothetical profits of Louisiana, whither a first expedition had been sent in May, 1718, had not at first greatly attracted the public. The lease of the tobaccos at four million francs, and the purchase of the rights of the Company of Senegal in consideration of one million six hundred thousand francs, had begun to improve the position of the company (September–December, 1718). Nevertheless, in April, 1719, the shares still stood at only three hundred francs in market, or two hundred below par.[2] Law succeeded in raising them to par about the 1st of May.[3] In the course of this month, the East-India Company, which, badly managed, involved in debt, and paralyzed, had finally ceded the use of its privileges to the merchants of Saint Malo, and a China Company created in 1712, were annexed to the Western Company, which thus had in its hands almost all the commerce of France outside of Europe, and thenceforth entitled itself the INDIAN COMPANY (it also absorbed the African or Barbary Company). It was authorized to add to its two hundred thousand original shares fifty thousand new shares at five hundred and fifty francs as the price of emission, no longer payable in state-notes, but in specie. It was necessary to represent four of the old shares to obtain one of the new ones. This was well calculated to raise the value of the original shares;

[1] *Histoire du Système des Finances*, t. V. p. 182.

[2] It is important, however, to remark that the stocks being purchasable in state-notes, which still lost more than half, the value of five hundred francs was only nominal: three hundred francs in specie was in reality above par.

[3] The means which he employed was to buy, at par, stocks deliverable within six months by paying one instalment in specie. He thus introduced premium markets from which is derived what is now called gambling in differences.

Digitized by Google

but it limited the number of subscribers, and did not belong to the true principles of Law. July 16, a decree of the council ordered the transmission of twenty-five million francs in bank-notes to Louisiana to facilitate business there. This raised Louisiana greatly in public estimation. July 25, the company leased the coinage for nine years, at the aggregate price of fifty millions. The stock at this moment attained the market value of one thousand francs, and thus gained one hundred per cent. July 27, twenty-five thousand new shares were emitted at this rate of one thousand francs; the nominal value of the shares still remaining five hundred francs. It was necessary to represent five of the old shares to procure one of the new ones. The emission of notes corresponded to the emission of shares: the two reservoirs of the bank and the company, as Lémontei says, fed each other. The same day, July 27, a decree of the council ordered a dividend of twelve per cent on the nominal price of the shares (five hundred francs) to be paid to the stockholders. The shares rose with increasing rapidity.

A month after, Law, urged by the Regent, believed himself able to risk a vast and bold operation which he had promised,—the redemption of the debt. A decree of the council, August 27, completed his victory over D'Argenson; the lease of the general farms, concluded under the auspices of the keeper of the seals, was annulled, and the farms were adjudged to the Indian Company at the price of fifty-two millions per annum, and on condition of reimbursing the stockholders of the other company. The King prolonged to the term of fifty years the privileges of the Indian Company. On these conditions, the company promised to lend the King twelve hundred millions to pay the bulk of the debt, provided that he would guarantee to it thirty-six millions annually on the product of the taxes; that is, it enabled the King to convert a debt at four per cent into a debt at three per cent. August 31, the *rentes* assigned on the aids and salt-taxes, the villain-taxes, etc., were abolished, the holders being ordered to present their titles to the keeper of the royal treasury, who would redeem them by drafts on the cashier of the Indian Company.

It was by means of an emission of two hundred and forty thousand new shares that Law designed to pay the twelve hundred millions; for this it was necessary that the shares should be worth five thousand instead of five hundred francs: they attained this value at that very moment. The lately hesitating public rushed with eagerness to take part in this powerful organiza-

Digitized by Google

tion, which seemed destined to absorb the entire State. The rumor of mines of gold and precious stones, discovered, it was said, on the Mississippi, completed the kindling of the public imagination.[1] The personages most deeply interested in the System were seen disputing with each other the grants of land, *the duchies*, *the marquisates*, distributed by the company in Louisiana. Law bid in for himself, among the Arkansas, a fief five hundred leagues in circumference. This confidence attracted that of the masses. September 13, a hundred thousand shares were created at the price of five thousand francs, payable in specie or in bank-notes, without the condition of representing prior shares. This did not guarantee the creditors of the State, to whom these shares were to revert, against the rivals who competed for their acquisition. They complained, and obtained a prohibition to pay for the last shares otherwise than in state-notes, or in drafts on the keeper of the treasury (September 26). The favor was not so great, after all; for the creditors received for five thousand francs' worth of titles of *rentes* a share worth five thousand francs in the market, but the original par value of which was only five hundred francs, and which might fall anew. From September 25 to October 2, two hundred thousand new shares were issued. This made three hundred thousand instead of two hundred and forty thousand: the reason was that Law had promised the Regent a second loan of three millions at three per cent, hypothecated, like the other, on the revenue from the taxes. This edict was published October 12, with a royal declaration, that the emission of shares was definitively ended. As the price of this second loan, the receiver-generalships were abolished, and their receipts united to the company, which thus had all the direct and indirect taxes in its hands. The company, by virtue of the decree of September 26, no longer receiving specie for the new shares, and the public rushing to the purchase of the shares with such frenzy that the precious metals, by their weight, became embarrassing and in the way, paper attained a premium of five and ten per cent above gold and silver. "Have you any gold?" — "No, indeed!" became a proverbial saying. The delay accorded to subscribers for the payments (October 20), a delay necessary to enable the creditors of the State to put themselves in a position to meet them, gave a new impulse to the market value. In Octo-

[1] Much charlatanism was used to render the Mississippi popular: nevertheless, the company was itself insnared by these illusions; for it spent a large amount of money in the search of a pretended rock of emerald.

Digitized by Google

ber the shares rose to ten thousand francs, twenty times their par value, and more than forty times their market value in specie at the time of the first emission. They did not stop there. The *History of the System of Finances* (t. II., III.) pretends that the shares rose to eighteen and twenty thousand francs; but this is not confirmed.

These figures, in their barren enunciation, astonish the mind. What will it be if we retrace in imagination the living picture of the community in the midst of which these prodigious financial movements were wrought? This picture is within the memory of all. Who does not know by tradition that narrow and dingy Rue Quincampoix, the centre of stock-jobbing,[1] with its thousand offices, whither, for six months, rushed and thronged all Paris, all France, and all Europe; where ranks, sexes, the different orders of state, great lords and prelates, military men, members of the bar, officials, merchants and clerks, masters and valets, court ladies and women of the town, mingled together in one long saturnalia? It was the equality of cupidity, the equality of play. And what play! Unheard-of fortunes were made there in a few days, in a few hours. Lackeys, enriched by a turn of the hand, purchased the carriages behind which they had mounted the day before. There were men who carried in their pocket-books sixty or eighty millions' worth of shares at the market rate! Two classes of persons had the principal part in this wealth, improvised as if by a fairy's wand, — the great lords and the farmers of the revenue. The cupidity of the princes and the higher nobility, the baseness of the courtiers before the Scotch Plutus who showered down stocks and bank-notes from his hands, were equalled only by the display and prodigality of the *parvenus* intoxicated by their fantastic elevation. But the public, wholly carried away by the irresistible impulse, scarcely stopped to moralize. Each day witnessed the arrival at Paris of streams of holders of *rentes* and officials, whose offices had been redeemed, hastening to invest their funds in shares: merchants, who came to watch the fluctuation, to profit by it for their trade, or to plunge into it on their own account; foreign speculators, imitators, curious spectators, adven-

[1] The Rue Quincampoix, situated between the Rues Saint Martin and Saint Denis, in the most commercial quarter of Paris, had long been occupied by bankers: during the War of the Succession, the brokerage of the *mint-bills* and of all the royal paper was carried on there: the habit was resumed and traffic in stocks established there in 1779. The enormous affluence spoken of by the Memoirs of the times dated especially from the month of August.

Digitized by Google

turers, and intriguers. Luxury and the throng increased at once in an incredible ratio; fabulous sums were expended almost as soon as gained; travel was interrupted by the innumerable multitude of carriages; gold and silver glittered everywhere on apparel of silk and velvet; the delights of Lucullus and Apicius were equalled by the *millionnaires* (it was then that the word was created) of the Rue Quincampoix; a frenzied and disorderly but prodigiously powerful impulse had been given to the commerce and manufactures of Paris. The concentration of the population was such from 1719 to 1720, that an historian does not hesitate to estimate it at one million four hundred thousand souls![1] The impulse of Paris reacted on all France; the amount of manufactures increased three-fifths; interest fell to one and a quarter per cent.

In the midst of this universal vertigo, popular and liberal measures, dictated by Law to the company, attest that he had other views than unbridled stock-jobbing. The company had generously requested of the King, in consideration of the abatement of a million francs annually on the farming of the tobaccos, the abolition of some duties onerous to commerce: it obtained permission to employ funds to undertake sea-fishery, and to establish manufactures, without claiming any monopoly on this account. Law revolved in his brain much vaster designs. He had proposed to the Regent the substitution for all the taxes of a single tax, the hundredth penny.[2] It was the taxation of capital, instead of the taxation of revenues proposed by Vauban. Reformatory minds are still divided between these two ideas. Law also wished to abolish the vendibility of office, to purchase the rights of possession, and to replace the parliament by magistrates removable at pleasure: but this idea belonged less peculiarly to him, and came from Dubois, according to Saint-Simon, who boasts of having twice hindered the Regent from realizing it; fearing, he says, despite his hatred of the bar, to see this last curb of despotism and ultramontanism broken.

Law, however, was not intoxicated by the prodigious rise of the shares, which had surpassed his anticipations and wishes: he had

[1] Lémontei, t. II. p. 206. There is certainly much exaggeration here. Where could all these people have lodged? The Princess Palatine, mother of the Regent, speaks, in her letters, of an increase of three hundred thousand souls over the ordinary population. This is certainly quite enough: it would have made nearly a million souls.

[2] Lémontei, t. I. p. 316. This important memorial, dated June 10, 1719, is unpublished. Law thought that the hundredth penny would yield two hundred millions.

Digitized by Google

too lofty an intellect not to be alarmed at the very exaggeration of the success. The value attributed to the shares by the fashion exceeding, beyond all comparison, the real value of the possessions and privileges of the company, and the amount of the ideal wealth in circulation in the Rue Quincampoix being such that all France might have been sold without covering it, it was evident that the most prudent *millionnaires* and *Mississippians* would perceive the illusion, *realize* their shares in notes, and their notes in specie or land, and thus give the signal for decline. A few had already begun. Still other perils pressed, on all sides, on the author of the System. The weakness, avidity, and bad faith of the government had engendered that abuse of credit which Law had lately foreseen with anxiety. The barriers set to the issue of notes had already given way before the hand of the Regent. D'Argenson was watching for the instant to avenge himself. A man more powerful over the mind of the Regent, the minister Dubois, at first friendly to Law, had received hostile instructions from England, to whom he was sold. The cabinet of London saw, with jealousy, British gold escaping from the South-Sea Company and the English East-India Company, to flow to Paris: it understood what an impulse the French colonies and marine were about to receive under an able and bold guidance, and it dreamed only of overthrowing the author of the System. Already the arrogant ambassador Stair had had altercations so violent with his fellow-countryman Law, that the minister Stanhope, thinking it necessary to undermine the latter, and not to attack him openly, judged it prudent to disavow and recall Stair.[1]

Law did not, therefore, disguise from himself the gravity of the situation. He had attempted to slacken the mad rise of stocks by a restraining movement; but it was too late: he was no longer strong enough to moderate his gigantic machine. Having been unable to slacken it, he was constrained to sustain it at any price. He saw no other means of saving the notes than to depreciate the metallic currency; and he launched into a series of fatal expedients, contrary to his own maxims, but which had become inevitable. De-

[1] See the letter of Dubois, February 24, 1720, ap. *Mém. secrets du Cardinal Dubois*, t. I. p. 311, Paris, 1815. There was already a plot to overthrow the bank by presenting a mass of notes for redemption; but Law had met it, and by a sudden diminution in gold had obliged the authors of this English intrigue to take back notes for their louis. The English ministers, having striven to establish a counter system by causing the rise of the stock of the South-Sea Company, Law bought in £1,600,000 worth of them at a low price for the French Company, and sold them again when they rose. — *Mém. de la Régence*, t. IV. p. 119; *Hist. du Système*, t. I. p. 160.

Digitized by Google

cember 1, he procured a decree that neither the bank nor the treasury should any longer receive specie, except for balances due. This was renouncing that part of the System which consisted in attracting the precious metals into the hands of the State, but providing for the most pressing need; that is, depreciating the metals by diminishing their use, and indirectly averting the conversion of notes into specie by the prohibition to convert specie into notes. This extreme course could not be sustained. December 21, a prohibition to make payments of over ten francs in silver, and of over three hundred francs in gold, was issued. The bank began again to deliver notes for silver, and the treasury to receive specie under ten francs and three hundred francs, but in consideration of a premium of five per cent (ten-franc notes had been issued to generalize the use of paper as much as possible). Foreign bills of exchange were to be paid in notes; a great error, which was destined to turn exchange against France. December 29, the emission of bank-notes was increased, *officially*, to one thousand millions. On the 30th, a general assembly of the company regulated the dividend of the stock at forty per cent on the par value of five hundred francs: this was scarcely two per cent for those who had bought it at ten thousand francs; but able financiers saw that this dividend was still largely fallacious. Many foreigners and a few French millionnaires had already converted their shares into cash, purchased real estate, or exported large sums, especially to England, where the still moderate price of the South-Sea Company stock attracted speculators. The decline commenced before the end of December.

Law faced the danger courageously. He assumed the patent responsibility of all that was to be done. Since the dissolution of the councils, the finances had been reputed to be administered by a sort of committee. Law, already naturalized, abjured Protestantism in order to become eligible to public functions, and took the title of Comptroller-General (January 5, 1720). After the first decline, he succeeded in arresting the shares, on the road to discredit, at between nine and ten thousand francs: he was aided by the manœuvres of the large holders, but especially by the former holders of the *rentes* that had been redeemed, who were reduced to the necessity of making use of their new investments. The latter, coming in the market in proportion as they were paid, replaced, for some time, the large speculators that had departed. But, while the shares were sustained, owing to this competition, the notes fell precipitately. The panic spread in the

Digitized by Google

city; confidence fled as quickly as it had arisen: despite the measures against specie, the merchants asked double when paid in notes, which caused the rise in price of all commodities; and the *realizers* besieged the bank. A prince of the blood, Conti, gorged with enormous wealth by the Regent and Law, set the example of this attack on public credit. At the first refusal that he experienced from the comptroller-general, worn out and disgusted with his insatiable gluttony, he revenged himself by bringing from the bank three vans laden with silver in exchange for his notes.[1] The Duke de Bourbon, the head of his branch, quite as rapacious as he, showed himself a little less vile, in this sense at least,—that he did not betray the bank and company which he eagerly plundered. Mark what the Condés had become! At the age when their brave ancestors knew nothing but love and war, the sole passions of their soul were usury and stock-jobbing.[2] By the side of their vices, the vices of Philippe of Orleans are almost noble!

Law continued his desperate struggle. January 28, a general recoinage of specie with a slight diminution was decreed: the bank-notes were made current throughout the kingdom; they had been so only at Paris, and in the cities where branch banks were established. It was prohibited to transport specie during the month of February from the cities where there were mints. Permission was given the company to search all houses "without exception," in order to discover the specie which had not been carried to the mint for recoinage, and which was to be confiscated in favor of the informers. Louis XIV. had ventured on nothing so tyrannical. What resources to sustain a system of credit! The conversion of paper into coin, far from being arrested, was precipitated with an impetuosity comparable to the suddenness of the rise. Men purchased, at any price, estates, offices, houses, merchandise, precious stones, fancy articles; every thing that presented any commercial value whatever. February 4 and 18, two

[1] Saint-Simon, t. XVIII. p. 96. "It suffices to be of the blood of the Bourbons to love this metal," says the attorney Barbier in his *Journal*, t. I. p. 193.

[2] One of them, the Count de Charolais, the brother of the Duke de Bourbon, even showed much more hideous passions. It is related that he began by assassinating one of his valets, whose wife he had been unable to seduce; that he stained his debauches with blood by ignoble barbarities on the courtesans that were brought to him; that he fired on the tilers to give himself the pleasure of seeing them fall from the roofs. He would have lost his head on the scaffold half a score of times, had it been possible for justice against princes to exist under the monarchy.—See Lacretelle, *Hist. de France pendant le* xviii. *siècle*, t. II. p. 59. The Marquis d'Argenson, in his Memoirs, while describing him as a kind of furious maniac, makes no mention of these crimes.

Digitized by Google

decrees of the council, for the purpose of obstructing this movement, prohibited the transportation of precious stones and of gold and silver plate. On the 22d, Law obtained from the Regent and the company the adoption of a measure from which he expected salvation: he caused it to be enacted that the King should restore to the company the administration of the bank, with the cession of all profits made and to be made; the bank remaining royal, and the King continuing to guarantee the notes. New notes could be emitted only by virtue of decrees of the council, after deliberations held in the general assembly of the company. The company was to make no advances to the King, and the bank was to make no payments to the treasury without having received security. The ten-franc notes were to be redeemed in specie, and destroyed; and the five per cent premium granted to paper over specie was abolished. These were wise concessions to the reflux of public opinion. The King ceded to the company a hundred thousand shares that belonged to him, at the price of nine hundred millions; three hundred millions of which were payable within a year, the rest in ten years. The company was to create five hundred millions' worth of shares in *rentes* at two per cent, to redeem the perpetual *rentes* belonging to corporations or minors, which it had been impossible to redeem from the fifteen hundred millions loaned to the King. The company was no longer to keep an open office for the purchase and sale of shares.

The prevailing idea in this important act was a final effort to rescue the bank from the rapacity of the arbitrary ruling power, and to save the notes at any price, even at the expense of the shares. This effort was to be in vain.

February 25, the augmentation of the coin was decreed. On the 27th, it was forbidden any private individual or community to keep more than five hundred francs in specie or bullion, under penalty of confiscation, and a fine of ten thousand francs: the treasurers of the King, manufacturers and merchants, were excepted by special permission. It was prohibited to make payments of over one hundred francs in specie, under penalty of a fine of three thousand francs. March 5, a decree of the council prescribed the prepayment, at maturity, of the sums loaned by the bank; fixed the shares at the exorbitant price that had been given to the King; and, contrary to the deliberation of February 22, opened an office at the bank, for the conversion, at pleasure, of shares into notes, and notes into shares. The fusion of the notes and the shares belonged, indeed, to the general spirit of the Sys-

Digitized by Google

tem; but, under the circumstances, nothing could have been more fatal. The notes were sacrificed to the shares; the general interest, to the interest of the nobility and the capitalists: the bank was condemned to multiply the notes when their depreciation prescribed their reduction. It is probable that Law's action was forced. The decree of March 5 impelled him violently towards the brink of destruction: the silver mark was raised to eighty francs; and a premium was again given to notes over specie. March 11, matters were carried much further. Gold was demonetized from May 1, silver from December 31, with the exception of the small coin of recent fabrication, with successive diminutions; so that silver, on the 1st of December, would have been reduced from eighty to twenty-seven francs a mark. It was sought to discourage the conversion of paper into coin at any cost. Private individuals were ordered to carry their specie to the bank under penalty of confiscation, half of which was for the informers.

We are seized with vertigo on contemplating the audacity of thus subverting the whole economic existence of society, and undertaking to abolish, as Saint-Simon says, what had been in use among mankind *since the days of Abraham*. In other times, a revolution would have followed from much less grievances; but men were worn out with the thirst for gain and the intoxication of play. A sort of stupefaction succeeded the madness of 1719. The strangest events scarcely gave rise to astonishment: they appeared like dreams. Men clamored, but they did not move; and enough obeyed for the bank to receive forty-five millions in a month. The masses, however, resisted passively, and kept their crowns. The greatest evil caused by the rash enterprises of the government was the demoralization which they excited. The denunciations were infinitely more wide-spread than in the times of the Chamber of Justice. Men saw with horror a son denounce his father. The Regent, with laudable inconsistency, punished this wretch for having applied the law. He did himself equal honor in another circumstance. Since the beginning of the decline, there had been increasing disorder in the Rue Quincampoix and its vicinity. Quarrels, thefts, and assaults multiplied in these narrow lanes. The prodigious farce, which no Aristophanes would have succeeded in reproducing, ended by a fearful tragedy. A young man of the highest nobility of the Netherlands, allied to the first families of France and to the Regent himself, Count de Horn, enticed a stock-jobber into a tavern, and stabbed him, in order to rob him of his pocket-book. The Regent, usually so

Digitized by Google

yielding to solicitations, knew how to be just, thanks above all to Law; and Count de Horn died on the wheel. On the same day of the assassination (March 22), stock transactions in the Rue Quincampoix were interdicted as useless, since there was an open office at the bank.

The edicts against specie were not the only cause of trouble that existed in Paris. Eager as the company had been to people Louisiana, it had sought to fill it up with all kinds of elements, whether pure or impure: ordinances of January 8 and March 12, 1719, had prescribed the transportation thither of vagabonds and convicts escaped from exile; a deplorable resource for an infant colony. A new edict of March 10, 1720, authorized the tribunals to substitute transportation for the greater part of the legal penalties, and ordered a general search for vagrants and mendicants for the same end. The police, wretchedly constituted since it had quitted the hands of D'Argenson, knew how to organize neither dépots nor means of transportation. The wretched emigrants were treated with the most barbarous neglect: they were left to perish of hunger! It happened, moreover, that the archers, commissioned to make the arrests, carried off not only vagrants, but persons of quite different condition, either to force them to ransom themselves from their hands, or to satisfy private vengeance at the price of gold. The people lost patience: the archers were set upon in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine; but the government extricated itself from blame by issuing, May 3, an ordinance giving guarantees against these monstrous abuses. May 9, it decreed that no more criminals or vagrants should be sent to Louisiana, on the energetic protest of the voluntary colonists against the blighting medley that was inflicted upon them.[1]

The public discontent did not therefore break out in a way to menace the existence of the government; but the System, nevertheless, continued on the road to destruction. Address, force, reasoning, — Law employed every thing in his defence. From February to May, 1720, he published anonymously, in the *Mercure de France*, four apologetic letters, by which he strove to recover public favor. We cannot refrain from pity for this lofty intellect, struggling with impossibilities, deceiving himself and endeavoring to deceive others by sophisms which he had formerly refuted. Law undertook to legitimize confiscation by eloquently attacking the men who monopolized the specie and obstructed its circu-

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 170; *Hist. du Système*, t. III. p. 136; Lémontei, t. I. p. 321.

Digitized by Google

lation.[1] He affirmed that the System would have become popular of itself in the end; but that *despotic* power, by establishing it authoritatively, had only advanced the public welfare; that the System had so completely enveloped every part of the State, that it was impossible now for the King or the public to destroy it! He justified the compulsory currency of notes, and the prohibition to keep specie, etc., "because the notes were secured either in specie or in shares, *the value of which was certain!*" An incontestable point in his plea is the picture of the benefits of the System, — the bank replacing the revenue-farmers to the immense advantage of the tax-payers; the additional value of all property; the impulse given to all the arts and manufactures; the marine springing up anew; all France revivified as by a miracle. He cannot be reproached with any charlatanism in what he says of Louisiana.

What was to be done, meanwhile, to save the source of these benefits? The shares, a moment revived, fell slowly, but irresistibly: the discredit of the notes was not arrested. It is said that Law returned to the project of extinguishing by an able scheme as many of the notes as possible, but that his credit had declined, and that D'Argenson secured the triumph of another plan, which was realized May 21.[2] On that day, a decree of the council appeared, which said nothing of withdrawing specie from circulation, but of establishing a just proportion between it and notes, shares and other property, and of preventing its greater value from diminishing credit. A gradual diminution was prescribed on the shares, which were to be reduced to five thousand francs on the 1st of December. The notes were also to be reduced one-half by gradation at the same epoch: they were to be received, however, without reduction, for taxes, and in payment for life-

[1] "Money is yours only by the title that gives you a right to call it so, and to make it pass through your hands to satisfy your needs and desires. Except in this case, the use of it belongs to your fellow-citizens. . . . The coin bears the stamp of the prince, and not yours, to apprise you that it belongs to you only for circulation, and that you are not at liberty to appropriate it to yourself in any other sense." This is true; but how many truths are there that cannot be established by force! Law applied to lands, to houses, to all property, what he says of money; that is to say, that the State has a right to take all these possessions from you, if the use you make of them is not useful to society. The State has a right to expropriate for public utility, but at the price of an indemnity which protects the individual right in the face of the social right: this reservation is not made by Law.—*Œuvres de Law*, ap. *Économistes financiers du* XVIII. *Siècle*, pp. 656–675.

[2] Such is the story of Saint-Simon, t. XVII. pp. 211–217; and of the *Histoire du Système*, t. III. p. 144. Lémontei, on the contrary (t. I. p. 322), after the Memoirs of the Duke d'Antin and Forbonnais (t. II. p. 623), insists that the plan adopted belonged to Law.

Digitized by Google

rentes, until January 1. The premiums and advantages granted to the notes were abolished.

It seems impossible to admit that Law was the author of an act which gave the death-blow to the System by depriving the notes of their invariability: Law, doubtless, only had the weakness to yield to what he could not help, instead of letting himself be ruined on the spot. Not that this act was really detrimental to the public. If the decree of May 21 be compared with that of March 5, on the diminution of specie and the proportion established, it will be seen that the holders of paper would still have had the advantage, on the 1st of December, over the possessors of specie; but this was too complicated for the public, who saw only one thing, — the loss of half of the nominal capital, *the bankruptcy of the System!* A cry of rage arose; the holders of the notes were less patient than the holders of specie; the parliament, long mute, reëntered the field with its remonstrances; and the storm of public opinion was such, that the Regent yielded. The decree of May 21 was revoked on the 27th, so far as the notes were concerned. On the 29th, the decree demonetizing specie was revoked, and the silver mark was fixed at eighty francs. June 1, the prohibition to keep specie and bullion was revoked. Whatever might have been the share of Law in the decree of the 21st, he bore the responsibility of it before the public, as of all the rest: the Regent, stunned by the universal clamor, seemed to abandon him. At the instigation of D'Argenson, Law was arrested, and summoned to give in his accounts. This afforded him an opportunity for a last triumph: the accounts of the bank and the company were as clear as daylight. The Regent offered him permission to keep the comptroller-generalship: he refused, advised him to administer it by a commission, retained the superintendence of the bank and the company, and caused D'Argenson to be disgraced, and the seals to be restored to the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, hoping to calm the public mind by the recall of this beloved and venerated personage.

The company had presented the most satisfactory statement of its affairs (June 3). It had founded settlements on the coasts of Louisiana, at Dauphin Island, at Mobile, and at Biloxi. In the interior, on an island of the great river, some deported salt-smugglers were founding an infant city which they called New Orleans in honor of the Regent. The French peasantry refusing to emigrate,[1] Law had *bought* of one of the German princes,

[1] The want of success of our colonies has been attributed to the mobility of the

Digitized by Google

accustomed to sell their subjects for any use, twelve thousand farm-laborers of the Palatinate, designed to people his duchy of the Mississippi; four thousand of whom had already been despatched from our ports. The fishery and the fur-trade were prospering under the protection of the forts that had been erected on Royal Island (or Cape Breton) to endeavor to replace the positions lost in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Colonial agriculture was developing rapidly under the influence of an excellent commercial regulation issued in 1717. Tobacco was increasing in Louisiana. Coffee was becoming naturalized in the Isle of Bourbon, whence it was destined to spread through all our tropical colonies. The second of the Mascarene Isles, Mauritius, abandoned by the Dutch, who had concentrated at the Cape, had been nominally occupied in 1715 by order of the government of Louis XIV., and baptized by the name of the Isle of France: inferior in soil to Bourbon, but superior in its coasts and harbors, it promised an important naval station to the East-India trade, and a new base of operations for the recapture of the great Island of Madagascar. The French flag was reappearing in all waters as in the best days of Colbert. In the preceding winter, the company had despatched eighteen ships to the East, and thirty to Louisiana and Africa: it now possessed a hundred and five large vessels, and values to the amount of more than three hundred millions. It had largely increased the revenue from all the taxes which it collected, not by oppressing the taxpayers, but by improving the administration of the collection.[1]

The company had withdrawn from the market nearly three hundred thousand shares besides the hundred thousand of the King, and requested that they should be extinguished, so as to reduce the whole amount to two hundred thousand. It asked to be released from the nine hundred millions due the King, and offered to cede back to him part of the forty-eight millions assigned to it on the taxes. It solicited permission to make a call on its stockholders for three thousand francs a share; paying, to those who should respond, a dividend of three per cent on the basis of twelve thousand francs a share, which dividend was to be guaranteed by an insurance society formed among the principal stockholders: the surplus profits were to belong to this society.

national character: it is quite the contrary. The reason is, that, among us, the agricultural population are so much attached to their native soil, that they will scarcely quit it at any price.

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 319; Forbonnais, t. II. p. 625.

Digitized by Google

The government consented to every thing: the company ceded back to it, at different times, forty-five millions of the assignments on the taxes. It was thus enabled to create twenty-five millions of *rentes* on the Hôtel de Ville, at two and a half per cent on the capital of one thousand millions, payable in unredeemable *rentes* or in notes (June 10); then twelve millions of life-*rentes*. This was returning to past expedients, but opening a large market to the notes. It was profited by but slowly. The prohibition to make payments of more than one hundred francs in silver was renewed, as well as a premium of ten per cent on paper, and the prohibition of precious stones.

Nothing succeeded. The two contradictory decrees of May 21 and May 27 had rendered the discredit irreparable. July 13, Law obtained authority to establish at the bank, and in all cities where there were branch banks, books of accounts current and transfers of the aggregate capital of six hundred millions. This institution, so useful to commerce, came too late. The bank was at the last extremity: it was forced to suspend payment, except of the ten-franc notes. The consternation was profound. The people, trembling lest the ten-franc notes should cease to be redeemed in turn, rushed to the bank with frenzied anguish. Stock-jobbing descended into the lowest strata of society. The porters of the markets turned speculators, bought up the notes at a discount, and forced their way through the crowd by main strength to the offices of the cashiers. They fought; they were stifled at the doors: many perished. Three corpses were carried by the people before the windows of the Regent. The carriage of Law was torn to pieces in the very court-yard of the Palais-Royal (July 17). The shares, meanwhile, had fallen to five thousand francs in notes, which was no longer equal to twenty-five hundred francs in specie. Every one strove to rid himself of the notes in any manner possible: merchandise sextupled in price.[1]

The popular agitation encouraged the ill-will of the parliament. The government having confirmed the privileges of the company,[2] *in perpetuity*, on condition that it should withdraw from circulation fifty millions of notes a month during a year, the parliament, which had registered the most urgent edicts, entreated the King to withdraw this confirmation, without even employing the time-hon-

[1] A pair of silk stockings sold for forty livres; an ell of fine gray cloth, from seventy to eighty livres. — *Journal* of the attorney Barbier, t. I. p. 42.

[2] With respect to the beaver-trade, a duty was, however, substituted for the monopoly.

Digitized by Google

ored form of remonstrance. Dubois and Law united against the common enemy; and the Regent, reviving under a newer form the act in vigor of August 28, 1718, exiled the parliament to Pontoise (July 20). The whole number of shares was again fixed at two hundred thousand; and the company was authorized to emit fifty thousand new ones at nine thousand francs, in order to give it the means of withdrawing the notes (July 31). The silver mark was raised to one hundred and twenty francs, July 30; then reduced, October 16, to sixty francs; the gold in proportion. These enormous variations of specie restored the notes for a moment to par; but they speedily fell again. New *rentes* were created as a means of investment; and, August 15, a decree of the council enacted that notes of one thousand and ten thousand francs, from October 1, should be no longer a legal tender, and should not be received at the treasury, except for *rentes*, shares, and bank-accounts: the small notes were to remain a legal tender until May 1, 1721; after which the treasury was no longer to receive them for taxes. The prohibition to stipulate for any payments whatsoever in gold or silver was removed. The credit system and the paper currency were condemned to death by the very power that had sustained them with so much violence! The shares, two months after, were put at two thousand francs. The notes fell ninety per cent! Every thing was in chaos. A new recoinage at ninety francs per mark was of much greater profit to foreigners than to the government. They indemnified themselves for what we had regained from them since 1716.

An effort was made to save the company in the wreck of the notes. The stockholders obtained the promise that their profits should never be investigated or taxed (August 29). The rights of the company established in 1698 for the southern part of St. Domingo were transferred to them, which gave them a corner of the West Indies which had hitherto remained outside their vast colonial domain.[1] The monopoly of the Guinea trade, which was free from Sierra Leone to the Cape, was also granted to them in perpetuity (September 10–17). The stockholders, it is true, were subjected to the payment of three thousand francs, at first optional. At the price to which the shares had fallen, the decline

[1] In 1717, Martinique had been the theatre of a very singular revolution. The governor and intendant of this island having rendered themselves insupportable to the inhabitants by their tyranny and exactions, the population rose unanimously, seized these two functionaries, and sent them to France; then became tranquil again, as if nothing had happened. Another governor was sent them, and thus the matter ended.

Digitized by Google

ought to have been checked, and the ground strengthened anew; but the best-founded hopes were foiled by a fatal event. A scourge that has remained too famous in our history, the *Plague of Marseilles*, broke forth at this moment in the south of France, and closed all foreign ports to our vessels. External trade was paralyzed for nearly a year.

A decree of October 10 revealed to the public the true situation of the bank: the Regent acknowledged that notes to the amount of three thousand and seventy-one millions had been fabricated; yet the decrees of the council, necessary according to the statutes, had authorized only two thousand one hundred and thirty-eight millions. The rest of the emissions had been secretly wrung from Law by the Regent. The politics and the prodigality of the Regent had vied with each other in drawing from this inexhaustible reservoir. The profusion of Philippe had exceeded any thing that can be imagined.[1] Of these three thousand millions, seven hundred and seven millions had been withdrawn or burned, five hundred and thirty employed in the acquisition of *rentes*, two hundred in accounts current at the bank, four hundred were in the public treasury, and four hundred and sixty-nine in the market. The decree set forth the means that remained for the use of notes, and thereby justified their withdrawal from circulation, "which they only fettered by maintaining the excessive price of merchandise." The currency was entirely abolished, no longer from May, 1721, but from the first of the ensuing November.

The company still continued to struggle: it obtained authority to borrow from its stockholders twenty-two million five hundred thousand francs (November 27). The government undertook to aid the stockholders who had retained their shares by violating the promise made not to subject those who had sold them to investigation. It was endeavored to force the latter to return to the company, and to buy the shares that were not invested. The cashier of the company, Verzenobre, had fled after realizing an enormous sum in gold, with which he enriched Prussia at our expense. October 29, it was forbidden, under penalty of death, to quit France without a passport until the 1st of January. This was tardy and ineffectual; the depreciation was not slackened;

[1] See the long lists given by Saint-Simon, — four hundred thousand francs to Madame de Rochefort, three hundred thousand francs to La Châtre, eight hundred thousand francs to Madame de Châteaufort, six hundred thousand francs to La Fare, etc., and pensions without number. — T. XVIII. pp. 11, 99, 131, 178.

Digitized by Google

the shares fell step by step to two hundred francs, then were to be bought for a louis!

The System was at an end. December 10, the Regent appointed a comptroller-general, Le Pelletier de la Houssaie: a few days after, he recalled the parliament, in consideration of mutual concessions. The suppression of the bank-accounts effaced the last trace. Dubois had finally persuaded the Regent to sacrifice Law irrevocably. Law quitted Paris December 14, and the kingdom soon after. This man, who had had the whole fortune of France at his discretion, carried away with him for his sole resource a few precious stones of indifferent value. He had magnanimously made it a point of honor utterly to abandon himself to the risks to which he exposed France. At Brussels, whither he first withdrew, he was joined by an envoy from the Czar, who had been to Paris in search of him. Peter the Great offered him the management of the finances of Russia. He was unwilling to trust himself to this barbarous empire, and retired to Venice, still turning his eyes towards France, and preserving a steadfast faith in his ideas. He only acknowledged the error of having wished to annihilate time. He died poor in 1729; leaving among us, in the midst of the reaction caused by his disaster, a profound admiration, and germs at once fruitful and formidable.

Law had pursued what he deemed economic truth: but there had been in him more than the love of an abstract truth, more than a conception of social mechanism; there had been the love of mankind, as in Vauban and Bois-Guillebert. More brilliant in intellect, less pure in morals, less firm in character, but not less humane, than they, he was thereby closely linked to the general spirit of the eighteenth century.[1] "Whatever his system may have been, it was conceived in the best possible faith. His interest never ruled him; he was true and simple; he possessed integrity; he had great thoughts on many things." Such is the judgment passed on him by the most censorious and scornful of men, Saint-Simon. Another testimony is still more decisive,—a letter from the Anglo-Hanoverian agent Schaub to the minister Dubois, representing the English interests in the French cabinet, of January 15, 1721. "Lord Stanhope (the English prime minister) has endeavored more than once to go to congratulate you on the master-stroke

[1] A mechanic that earns twenty pence a day is more valuable to the State than a landed capitalist of twenty-five thousand pounds." — Law, cited by Lémontei, t. I. p. 298.

Digitized by Google

by which you have ended the year that has just closed *by ridding yourself of a rivalry equally dangerous to you and to us.*"[1]

Law had left in chaos that France which he had undertaken to render so rich and prosperous; the plague devastating two great provinces;[2] all the rest of the kingdom disorganized; the currency more completely paralyzed than in September, 1715; a frightful mass of discredited paper encumbering every thing; the gold and silver confined in a few hands; all the works stopped; provisions monopolized or inaccessible by their price, — a dreary awakening from a dazzling dream!

The government extricated itself from the crisis by the old expedients, — violence and bad faith. It became bankrupt after the System, as it would have done without the System: it was the second general bankruptcy within six years! The four brothers Pâris, the public executioners in financial matters, were charged with the new *visa*, to which were subjected all holders of paper connected with the System, including the contracts for *rentes* purchased with notes (January 26, 1721).[3] It was nothing less than the census of all the fortunes in France.[4] Categories were established, making a discount of one-sixth in nineteen-twentieths; an immense labor, by which it was sought, as in 1716, to observe a sort of relative justice in the violation of public faith. Five hundred and eleven thousand persons deposed to two thousand two hundred and twenty-one millions of paper, which was reduced five hundred and twenty-one millions: there remained about one thousand seven hundred millions, which was admitted as the capital of life and perpetual *rentes* on the Hôtel de Ville and the villain-taxes, or as payment for municipal offices (hereditary mayorships, etc.), which were reëstablished in 1722, and letters of mastership, which were created in the same year. A very small part of the debt (eighty-two and a half millions) was acquitted in specie. For the rest, forty millions per annum were assigned on the taxes, which guaranteed at most two per cent revenue for the perpetual *rentes*, and four per cent for the life-*rentes:* after

[1] *Mém. secrets* of Cardinal Dubois, t. II. p. 2. These are not really Memoirs, but authentic documents intercalated into a narration written by M. de Sevelinges, Paris, 1815. — Saint-Simon, t. XV. p. 384.

[2] See *Appendix*, I., — the Plague of Marseilles.

[3] The bank-notes did not constitute half of the paper with which France was filled, — subscriptions of the company, receipts of the treasury, titles of new *rentes*, etc.

[4] There were, according to a letter of Dubois, four hundred thousand declarations at Paris, and five hundred thousand in the provinces. — *Mém. secrets* of Dubois, t. II. p. 210.

Digitized by Google

the extinction of the latter, their part was to be employed in beginning the redemption of the other *rentes*. This was not realized; and the sinking-fund, established in England a few years before, was not instituted in France.

The second *visa* terminated, it was found that the debt still exceeded six hundred and twenty-five millions of capital, and twelve millions six hundred and twenty-five thousand francs of interest at two per cent for the debt regulated by the first *visa!* There was, however, ample compensation in the liberation of the revenues and the additional value of the taxes: from sixty-nine millions in September, 1715, the net revenue had increased to one hundred and twenty-three millions. The finances might, therefore, have been retrieved, owing to the exemplary patience with which the nation permitted its government to redeem itself at pleasure by bankruptcy:[1] but, for this, a little order and economy would have been needed, instead of idly squandering more than the magnificence of Louis XIV. had cost. The Regency persisted in the habits acquired during the ephemeral opulence of the System. The pensions were increased to twenty millions to indemnify those of the courtiers who had been unsuccessful in stock gambling. The royal orders on the treasury, the expenditures screened from the Chamber of Accounts, amounted to one hundred and eighty-five millions in 1721. At the close of this year, ninety-six millions had already been forestalled on the ensuing years. The government had recourse to loans, alienations, creations of offices, and all the evil stereotyped practices, at the same time that it fell back on the large *realizers*, who were enjoying the fruit of their prudent distrust, while the holders who had had faith in the State were expiating it so harshly. The realizers, those at least who were not princes or in credit with the government, had lost nothing by waiting: the Chamber of Justice was not instituted against them; but they were taxed with full despotic power (July, 1722). One hundred and eighty of them were forced to pay nearly one hundred and eighty-eight millions. The government profited little by it. In proportion as it preyed on others, it was itself preyed upon by a swarm of harpies.[2]

The work of Law, however, had not wholly perished. A part

[1] Dubois defined the French monarchy as "a government that becomes bankrupt when it wishes," yet pretended that this was a very strong government. — See Lémontei, t. I. p. 105.

[2] Several commissioners of the *visa* were condemned to death for theft. — Lémontei, t. I. pp. 346–354; *Mém. de la Régence*, t. III.–V.; Bailli, t. II. p. 95.

Digitized by Google

of it subsisted, greatly perverted, it is true, greatly changed from the first idea. At first, it had seemed impossible for the company to survive the bank. After having despoiled it of the general receipts, the farms, the coinage, and the whole administration of the taxes, which was restored to the former basis (January 5, 1721), the council obliged it to become responsible for the bank; that is, to bear the responsibility of the ruinous demands which the Regent had imposed upon Law. This iniquitous act was accomplished only in appearance: too many powerful persons were interested in the company, — the Duke de Bourbon and others. The Regent furnished it secretly with one hand what it was to refund to the other, — one thousand one hundred and seven millions of notes.[1] It was revived and reorganized. The *visa* reduced its shares to less than fifty-six thousand, which were fixed at five thousand francs. Their traffic was regulated, and received an official character: this was the origin of the *Bourse*, an institution which exercised great influence upon our political manners, by permitting the verification, from day to day, of the degree of confidence inspired in moneyed men by the government. The monopoly of tobacco and coffee was granted in 1723 to the company, which had retained all its commercial privileges and all its colonial possessions, and which remained invested with really tyrannical power over the external commerce of France. A vast monopoly in favor of a few, — this, therefore, was all that remained of those plans which projected the association of the whole for the profit of the whole!

It was all that remained of it as a direct result; but its indirect results were immense. France, stirred up, shaken to her very foundations, by this gigantic experiment, had drawn in rival nations after her. England and Holland, which had preceded her in institutions of credit, set about grossly copying her with a kind of frenzy. The vertigo seized our neighbors when it decreased among us, in 1720. The English South-Sea Company, which, separated from the bank and the East-India Company, had nothing that resembled the firm basis of Law, and acted after no general idea, duped all England by shameless manœuvres; and all the phenomena that had been witnessed at Paris were reproduced at London on a smaller scale, but with worse folly. The end was more

[1] The Regent determined on this only after a violent scene, in open council, with the Duke de Bourbon. He had had the perfidy to accuse Law of having made, unknown to him, the emissions which he himself had extorted from Law. No one believed him. — See Saint-Simon, t. XVIII. p. 298.

Digitized by Google

tragic, and savored of the violence of English political manners. The parliament pitilessly punished the leaders of the company, and the statesmen who had made themselves their accomplices. The warmth of the discussions was such, that the prime minister, Lord Stanhope, died of it almost on 'Change, stricken down in his seat in parliament by apoplexy. The commercial genius of England speedily recovered from this humiliating reverse, and Holland also repaired almost noiselessly the consequences of an error so little in conformity with her character. England, for a moment a wretched plagiarist, regained her advantages by preserving the public credit, which, among us, had disappeared with its founder.

With Law did not disappear, in like manner, the private credit, the new needs and means, the spirit of enterprise and adventure, all that new economic life which he had infused into the veins of France. Commerce, with the exception of a few articles of luxury, remained for some time crushed beneath the ruins of the System; but, at the expiration of four or five years, it recovered by degrees from its paralysis, and again received a powerful impulse. The commercial and maritime genius which belonged to the government in the times of Colbert had now been transferred to the country, outside the government. Proofs were soon to be given of this, despite the fetters caused by the monopoly of the company. French commerce owed its progress incontestably to Law; but, strange to say, it was to another class of society, to the landed proprietors, to the holders of the *rentes* created, consequently to the nobility,[1] that the System was directly most profitable. Louis XIV. had left his military nobility in a state of almost general bankruptcy, and protected against its creditors by an extension of three years (July 14, 1714), which the Regent prolonged (July 14, 1717). The System liberated the property of the nobility at little cost by an avalanche of bank-notes. The nobles rushed frenziedly into the System: they had been unwilling to become merchants with Colbert; they became stock-jobbers with Law, then against Law.[2] The true children of the soil, the agriculturists, the farmers, had at

[1] The nobility finds itself, from the most illustrious to the least, in continual need of the possessions of private individuals of the third order (the third estate). To one creditor of the second order (of the nobility), a thousand would be found of the third; and, on the contrary, one debtor of the third to a thousand of the second.—Saint-Simon, t. XV. p. 15.

[2] Lémontei, t. II. p. 271. The nobles were not the only ones that liberated themselves with paper by means of the compulsory currency. Many religious communities, the Company of Jesus at the head, liquidated their debts in this manner.

Digitized by Google

first gained much by the System; they then lost again like the merchants: nevertheless, provisions did not return to their former price. The magnificent highways which were commenced during the System, and which were, perhaps, the most essential addition made by the eighteenth century to the creations of Colbert, encouraged the increase of products, the sale of which became more easy.[1] This progress was especially marked in the central part of France, still so much behind the age, almost barbarous even under Louis XIV. The mountaineer population between the Rhone and the Charente awakened to modern life.

In short, the crisis of the System was fatal to the monarchy, the policy of which it debased. The King, at least the government of the King, had been a banker, and an unfortunate and dishonest banker! It was advantageous materially, fatal morally, to the higher nobility, which degraded its character by joining to its former defects vices unknown to its ancestors: it was fatal, in many respects, to public morals, by the overflowing license which accompanied the financial intoxication, and by the feverish thirst for material enjoyments which had been over-excited in the nation, and which survived the System. The crisis was advantageous to commerce, to agriculture, to the general economy of France, despite the subversion that transpired in private life: it favored at once the rural districts and Paris, which preserved in part the prodigious increase that it had received, and the extended intercourse that it had opened with the provinces. The mixture of the classes was a political advantage, although effected under the unhealthy auspices of stock-jobbing: if the government and the higher classes were lowered, the middle classes rose. The contrast became still more strongly outlined. The government, disgusted with its great trial, became more and more mediocre,

[1] Colbert had not neglected to give highways to France; but they were not of sufficient breadth, and were not paved. At the close of the reign of Louis XIV., they were in very bad repair in most of the provinces, owing to the malversations of the functionaries of all classes, who made themselves roads for the use of their estates with the money designed for the maintenance of the highways. — See Saint-Simon, t. XII. p. 370. Important modifications in the military régime also took place during the general impulse of the System. In 1719 the foundation was commenced of four hundred and eighty-eight barracks, designed to quarter the troops, and to relieve the people from the quartering of soldiers, so fruitful in abuses and annoyances. The exactions committed by troops on the march, under divers pretexts, were abolished, and the pay, which had become absolutely insufficient, was increased. Five theoretical and practical schools were founded, February 5, 1720, for the improvement of the artillery, which was organized anew. On the other hand, the proportion of the cavalry in the army, too considerable and too expensive, was diminished.

Digitized by Google

stereotyped, and contemptible: vulgar selfishness, the fear of all progress and all ideas, the abhorrence of the name of the System, ruled among almost all the men of power and business. Meanwhile, the nation did not cease to grow in enlightenment, in wealth, and in humanity, if not in morality. The consequences of this divorce might be still remote; but they were inevitable.[1]

[1] Concerning the System as a whole, consult the Works of Law, ap. *Économistes financiers du dix-huitième siècle*, Paris, Guillaumin, 1843; the principal apologists, — Melon, *Essai politique sur la commerce*, ibid.; Dutot, *Réflexions politiques sur les finances et le commerce*, ibid.; *Hist. du Système des Finances en* 1719-1720; Senovert, editor and commentator of Law's Works, 1790; Louis Blanc, *Hist. de la Révolution française*, t. I. liv. ii. ch. vii., — this chapter is the most eloquent panegyric existing on the System and its author; the principal adversaries, — Pâris Duvernei, *Examen des Réflexions politiques sur les finances* (a refutation of Dutot); Forbonnais, t. II. (adverse, but with his usual moderation and good faith); Eugène Daire, *Notice sur Law*, ap. *Économistes financiers du dix-huitième siècle*. M. Thiers has written an article on Law in the *Encyclopédie Progressive;* but he only treats the purely financial side. Here ends the great work of Forbonnais, *Recherches et Considérations sur les finances de France*. It is not without regret that we separate from this guide, so well informed, so sensible, so purely and simply patriotic, and without which the financial history of the seventeenth century would have been almost impossible to us.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

THE REGENCY (Concluded).

Ministry of Dubois. — Dubois induces the Regent to adopt the English Alliance for the Interest of the House of Orleans. Concessions to England and Austria. Alliance with England, Holland, and Austria. Spain attacks Austria in Italy. Anglo-French Intervention in Favor of Austria. Spain, invaded, is forced to make Peace. Modifications of the Treaty of Utrecht. Sicily given to Austria. Alliance with Prussia. Peace in the North reëstablished through the Mediation of France. Peter the Great at Paris. Russia and Turkey make Advances to France. Dubois wards them off to avoid endangering the English Alliance. Dubois Cardinal. Return to Despotism and Ultramontanism. Dubois resumes the policy of Louis XIV. at home while destroying it abroad. Death of Dubois. Death of the Regent.

1715–1723.

The economic experiment that had just subverted French society had had an incontestable greatness, even in its errors. But this greatness did not belong to the government of the Regency, but had been brought to it from without by an adventurer of genius, who passed away like a meteor. Diplomacy is about to show us another adventurer, directing the external relations of France, and, through these external relations, possessing himself of all else. But here we must no longer expect to see the gleam of a single ray of glory: the last one died out in the tomb of Louis XIV. France is about to become degraded under a ruler who calls to mind the vile freedmen of the Cæsars, — a reign of a baseness and corruption, for which a perverse ability, and talents employed oftenest for evil, cannot compensate.

When Philippe of Orleans, after taking the government in hand, cast his eyes about him on Europe, he saw embarrassments which might become perils, in two directions, — that of England and of Spain.

Louis XIV., as we have said, in his last days had entered upon a perilous course towards England: he secretly favored the Pretender, James III., whose partisans took up arms in Scotland and the north of England at the very moment that the Great King expired. George I. saw therefore, with joy, the accession of the Regent, to whom he had made secret offers during the illness of

Digitized by Google

the late King, and counted on a complete change in the French policy. The Regent, however, wavered, gave good words at once to the reigning monarch and to his rival, and suffered the Pretender, who had withdrawn to Lorraine since the peace, to traverse France in disguise, for the purpose of embarking at Dunkirk, and making a descent in Scotland (January 2, 1716). The Jacobite insurrection, badly contrived and badly directed, was already stifled in England, and on its decline in Scotland, where it had been more serious in character, owing to the support of the Highlanders. The Pretender, dulled by a monastic education, and better fitted, as Bolingbroke says, for a capuchin than a king, was not the man to revive a vanquished party: he reëmbarked at the expiration of six weeks, without having seen the enemy, and took refuge in the papal city of Avignon, while his adherents were dying on the scaffolds of the implacable George. The Hanoverian King, and his triumphant party, bore ill-will to the Regent for a neutrality without frankness. The existence of Mardyck, which threatened to replace that Dunkirk so odious to British commerce, was also a standing cause of irritation beyond the Channel: there was reason, therefore, to apprehend that the King of England would agree with the Emperor to set aside the treaty of Utrecht on the first opportunity. The Whigs had unceasingly protested against this treaty, on which the peace of the West reposed; and the Emperor had not accepted it. Charles of Austria, surrounded at Vienna by Spanish refugees, continued to decorate himself with the title of King of Spain, and still proscribed at this moment, as rebels, those of his Belgian, Milanese, or Neapolitan subjects who had followed the party of Philip V. There was, therefore, merely a simple truce between Austria and Spain in relation to Italy; and it seemed as if the least spark might rekindle a great war.

In the direction of England, there might therefore be danger to France: in the direction of Spain, the peril was wholly a personal one to the Regent. Through his ancient grievances, and through the antagonism of their interests and characters, Philip V. bore to Philippe of Orleans a hatred to which the latter, who neither knew how to love nor hate, responded only by indifference. Philip V., bigoted, faithful to his wife, obstinate, hypochondriacal, rancorous, and narrow, as incapable of renouncing his pretensions, whatever they might be, as of maintaining them by himself, bore but a single trait of resemblance to the Regent, indolence. He believed in all the crimes imputed to the Duke of Or-

Digitized by Google

leans; and his conscience confirmed his ambition in the idea of disputing France with this impious adversary. He had thought of crossing the Pyrenees, at the news of the death of Louis XIV., to hasten to claim the Regency; but boldness had failed him at the moment of action. Now he designed, if the feeble child who was the heir of the Great King should die, to claim no longer the Regency, but the throne, of France, despite the solemn renunciation to which he had been made to subscribe, and the reversion guaranteed to the Orleans branch by the treaty of Utrecht. He persuaded himself that his oaths were void, and that he had not had the power to renounce his rights. In this event, he intended to transmit the crown of Spain to the son left him by his first wife. He determined at the same time, no longer as a contingency, but as a fixed plan, to reconquer the Spanish States of Italy from Austria, which, on its side, thought only of strengthening itself, and gaining ground in Italy. The second wife of Philip V., Elizabeth Farnese, the niece of the Duke of Parma, and nearly related to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, consummated and ruled by her own ambition the ambition of her husband: she would have overturned Europe to find States for her children among the ruins. Spain being destined for their half-brother by the first marriage, she wished to secure for them the reversion of Parma and Tuscany; and, in case of the death of Louis XV., she aimed at nothing less for them than the crown of France.

An extraordinary man, who had long been seen in Italy, France, and Spain in the retinue of the cynical Duke de Vendôme, and who, after having made his first appearance among the nobility as a buffoon and familiar of low degree, had revealed, by degrees, the genius of Richelieu and Mazarin combined, — the Abbé Alberoni, the fellow-countryman of Elizabeth Farnese, — administered the government under the Parmesan queen, and promised Elizabeth and Philip to realize all their wishes if they would grant him five years of peace to reorganize Spain.[1] Equally devoted to Spain and Italy, his inmost thought was to regenerate his new country and to free his old one by the expulsion of the Austrians. He labored with

[1] This was about 1715. — See *Apology for Alberoni*, ap. W. Coxe; *Memoirs of the Kings of Spain of the House of Bourbon*, translated, with notes and additions, by Don Andrès Muriel, t. II. p. 253. From the beginning of 1716, the revenues of Philip V. exceeded by one-third those of his predecessors, and the expenditures did not amount to one-half, which was owing, it is true, in great part, to the salutary curtailments to which Spain had been subjected, and to the suppression of the privileges of Aragon and Catalonia. — *Ibid.* p. 271. One of the benefactions of Alberoni was the suppression of the internal customs.

Digitized by Google

admirable energy and activity to liberate the revenues, reduce the expenditures, and revive commerce, the arts and manufactures, the marine and the army; but, obliged to serve the royal passions, he alienated Spain from France, governed by the object of his master's hatred, and sought to gain over England and Holland by important commercial concessions, that they might not oppose the undertakings of Spain against the Orleans in case of the death of Louis XV., or side with the Emperor in Italy. Explanatory articles, adroitly introduced at the conclusion of the treaty of Utrecht by the counsel of Louis XIV., had almost annulled the advantages granted by the treaty to English commerce in Spain. Alberoni caused these obstacles to be removed by a new treaty, December 15, 1715; promised promptly to put the English South-Sea Company in possession of the *assiento* (the negro slave-trade), which the Spaniards had delayed doing; and, lastly, offered the maritime powers to guarantee the succession in the Hanoverian line in England, and the *barrier* of the Netherlands, on condition that England and Holland would defend the neutrality of Italy, if necessary, against the Emperor, and support the pretensions of the Queen of Spain to the duchies of Parma and Tuscany; propositions which, it may be said in passing, prove that Alberoni dissuaded Philip V. from speedily taking the offensive in Italy.

The Regent, left to himself, would probably have awaited events in a defensive attitude, without taking a decisive course; and his indolence would have had the same effect as disinterested patriotism.[1] Some one willed for him. Philippe of Orleans had in his house a personage who had been to him, almost from his infancy, a sort of familiar demon; namely, the Abbé Guillaume Dubois. The son of an apothecary of Brives-la-Gaillarde, reared, almost by charity, in a college at Paris, had filled the place of preceptor to divers private individuals, next had succeeded in introducing himself into the sub-governorship of the young Philippe, then Duke de Chartres, and, from there, in causing himself to be appointed preceptor to the Prince through the protection of the Chevalier de Lorraine, the infamous pander of the Duke of Orleans, the father of the Regent. Dubois did not belie the impure origin of his fortune. No one could have been more fatal to an ardent and yielding young man. He had all the vices of the heart, with all the good qualities of the mind and the character, at least if we understand by this the perse-

[1] Louis XV. living, Spain would have made no attack; and the rupture, so contrary to the interests of both nations, would not have taken place.

Digitized by Google

vering energy, not of ideas and sentiments, but of will. Of sparkling wit and humor, endowed with a flexible, penetrating, and extended intellect, and a surprising faculty of labor, but base, corrupt, and crafty as falsehood itself, an unbeliever in all principle, all virtue, and all moral or religious faith,[1] he had employed every means, even the most impure, to possess himself of the young prince: preceptor in the morning, and procurer at night, he created, as far as possible, his pupil in his own image. The only virtues that he could not take away from him were a groundwork of natural goodness which the contempt of men did not destroy, and the forgetfulness of injuries.

Until the death of Louis XIV., the Abbé Dubois, become, from the preceptor, the secretary of commands of his former pupil, had had no opportunity to make an important figure, although he had succeeded in establishing himself on a good footing at court by laboring for the marriage of Philippe of Orleans to a natural daughter of the King, — a marriage which Philippe's mother harshly resented. Saint-Simon relates, that, on the accession of Philippe, his mother, the dowager Duchess of Orleans,[2] with the German rudeness that characterized her, entreated him never to employ "that rascally Abbé Dubois, the greatest knave in the world." Philippe promised; and, a few days after, appointed Dubois councillor of state, to the great scandal of the whole council. It was "putting his foot into the stirrup." Dubois was approaching sixty; but ambition kept alive a juvenile ardor in his body, worn out by debauchery. As soon as he saw his pupil at the head of affairs, he surveyed Europe with a firm and lucid glance, estimated the situation, and arranged for Philippe the plan of a whole system of policy. It was the Regent's interest first to strengthen the security of his Regency; then, if Louis XV. should die young or without a male child, to secure the throne to the branch of Orleans against the pretensions of the Spanish branch. Another interest in Europe offered some analogy: that of the house of Brunswick-Hanover in maintaining itself on the throne of England, against the pretensions of the Stuarts. Now, the English Pretender could do nothing against the Hanoverian King without the coöperation of

[1] "Dubois was a little, meagre, slender man, with a weasel-like mien. All the vices — perfidy, avarice, debauchery, ambition, base flattery — combated in him as to which should remain the master. . . . He had accustomed himself . . . to an artificial stammering, to give himself time to read others. . . . A vapor of falsity exhaled from him through every pore." — Saint-Simon, t. XII. p. 187.

[2] Better known under the name of the *Princess Palatine*.

Digitized by Google

France; and the King of Spain had no chance against the Duke of Orleans if the latter was supported by England. To ally the houses of Hanover and Orleans by the affinity of their position, and consequently France and England, and to consolidate by this alliance the peace of the West, which was to the common interest of George and Philippe, — such was the system which Dubois presented to the Regent. Philippe acceded.

The Hanoverian was in possession; the Duke of Orleans had only a provisional power and hopes: it was for him to make the advances and concessions. The Regent despatched an agent to London, commissioned to propose a triple alliance between France, England, and Holland, for the purpose of guaranteeing the treaty of Utrecht. Dubois opened a correspondence with the minister Stanhope; and the Regent sanctioned, under *penalty of death*, the probibition to French navigators to traffic in the South seas, contained in the treaty of Utrecht (January 29, 1716): he then reduced the import duties on English coal (February 29).

The English government at first received somewhat coldly the advances by which the two governments of France and Spain disputed with each other its friendship. George I., who remained more German than English, belonged wholly to Austria: his electorate was nearer his heart than his three kingdoms; and he needed the support of the Emperor to preserve Bremen and Verden, spoils of Sweden which he had purchased from the Danes in order to enlarge Hanover. May 25, 1716, George concluded with the Emperor Charles VI. a defensive compact, by which the contracting parties guaranteed to each other their existing possessions in Europe, and "those which they might acquire by common agreement."[1] England and Austria urged Holland to accede to this treaty. The Spanish government was greatly offended at such a response to its commercial concessions, and hastened to annul them in practice. The Regent and Dubois were not discouraged. K[illegible] George was about to pass through Holland on his way to H[illegible] ver.[2] Dubois, who piqued himself, like his master, on literary and artistic tastes, set out for Holland under the pretext of going to visit the picture galleries and libraries (July, 1716), intercepted the King of England on the way, conferred at length with the minister Stanhope, then followed King George to Hanover. The

[1] Dumont, *Corps diplomatique*, t. VII. p. 477. The war between the Emperor and Turkey was excepted from the defensive compact.

[2] The suppression of the Jacobite rebellion had procured for George the revocation of the prohibition to quit the English soil.

Digitized by Google

Hanoverian king and the Whig minister finally suffered themselves to be persuaded to accept the advantages that were humbly offered them; and secret preliminaries were signed, October 9. A close alliance was agreed upon, into which Holland was to be brought. The French government promised, 1st, to oblige the Pretender to quit Avignon, and withdraw beyond the Alps, and never to give him any assistance; 2d, to destroy and fill up all the new works at Mardyck that could make it a port of war, to retain there only a canal sixteen feet wide for small vessels, and to complete the demolition of the remains of the harbor of Dunkirk. England and Holland were empowered to "send commissioners to the spot to be ocular witnesses of the execution of this article."[1] France and England mutually guaranteed the execution of the treaties of Utrecht, so far as their respective interests were concerned, and especially "the successions to the crown of Great Britain in the Protestant line, and the crown of France, according to the aforesaid treaties." They promised each other the reciprocal assistance of ten thousand soldiers against aggressors without or rebels within.

Such was this compact, which was destined to survive its authors, and to link France to England for a quarter of a century. The form was worse than the substance. Not only did George I. retain, in the preamble of the copy kept by his ministers,[2] the ridiculous title of King of France, which the English monarchs transmitted to each other from dynasty to dynasty, but, this same title having been ascribed to Louis XV., the English ministers protested against it, and obtained the substitution of that of the Most Christian King; "thus refusing to the heir of Louis XIV. the use of his own name."[3]

Holland hesitated long to enter as a third party into the alliance. Crushed by the part which she had arrogated to herself in the War of the Succession, she renounced with affright the ruinous ambition of being the arbiter of Europe, and sought henceforth only to conciliate every one. She feared alike to dissatisfy the Emperor and Spain, to whom the new compact must be almost equally displeasing. She consented at last, however, in consideration of the abolition of the entry duties of four

[1] This clause, already so humiliating, was still aggravated in its execution. The administration of the Regent, then of Louis XV., had the cowardice to permit the English commissioners to install themselves permanently at Dunkirk.

[2] This copy was drawn up in Latin; the English having been unwilling to permit French to be used as in the preceding treaties.

[3] Lémontei, t. I. p. 107.

Digitized by Google

sous per livre, paid by her merchandise in France; and the Triple Alliance was officially signed January 4, 1717, at the Hague.[1]

The prejudices against France were so strong on the other side of the Channel, that this treaty, so advantageous to England, was not accepted without difficulty by public opinion and by the parliament. The Duke of Orleans appeased the most influential leader of the opposition, Mr. Pitt (the father-in-law of Lord Stanhope, and the father of the Earl of Chatham), by purchasing from him on account of the crown, at the price of two million francs,[2] a huge brilliant that has remained famous under the name of the Regent diamond.

Scarcely had the Regent pledged France to the English alliance, when an attempt was made to draw her into another system of alliance, in which every thing was new, even to the name of the ally who offered himself, and who had never been taken into account hitherto in French policy. The Czar of Russia came in person to offer his friendship to France.

The aim of Peter the Great's first journey to the West is well known, — to study with head and hand all the arts and sciences that contribute to the strength of empires; to make himself the first soldier, the first sailor, the first mechanic, of his nation, the chief workman in every trade. He had returned to his chaos of the North, like a kind of demiurge going to remould and fabricate a world; and in a few years he had made a Europe, at least the semblance of a Europe, where the day before there had been nought but a Western Tartary on a level with the people of Kasan and Samarcand. Now, after having organized the confused mass of his empire, commenced its territorial unity by a vast system of canalization, and transferred the imperial residence from the stagnant Moscow to a maritime capital, which he had created, as if by miracle, on the eastern bank of the Baltic, wrested from the Swedes — after having reëstablished his ruling influence over Poland, which Charles XII. could no longer dispute with him, he came to study, not now the arts, but the cabinets, of Europe, at a moment when all traditional relations were vacillating, or yielding to new combinations. Disposed to moderate his resentment against Sweden, he deemed it less useful to his greatness to pursue this rival, reduced to powerlessness, to the recesses of the North, than to labor to take its place in Germany. As soon as he

[1] See the treaty in Latin and French in Lamberti, t. X. p. 1.
[2] Lémontei, t. I. p. 107.

Digitized by Google

regained his ascendency over Poland, he stretched his arm beyond the Vistula to the mouths of the Elbe, and aimed to procure the cession to himself of Holstein or of Mecklenburg, in order to become a member of the Germanic Empire, and to hold both extremities of the Baltic. His troops, introduced into the north of Germany as the allies of Prussia and Denmark, already persisted in occupying Mecklenburg, despite the warm protests of the Emperor and the Elector-King, George I.

The Czar Peter reached Holland by the way of Denmark and Lower Saxony in the winter of 1716–1717, and found there an agent of Charles XII., who, it is said, sounded him concerning a reconciliation with his master, and an alliance with Sweden and Spain against George I., the Hanoverian king who was thwarting Peter in Germany, and who had given him other causes of complaint. Peter listened, pledged himself to nothing, and determined to proceed to France to attempt to modify the policy of the Regent.[1] He landed at Dunkirk April 30, 1717, and reached Paris May 7. Anecdotes are found everywhere of his journey, his intelligent study of all our great institutions, the delicate flatteries that surrounded his steps, and the piquant contrast presented by the rugged majesty of this great semi-barbarian to the effeminacy and fastidiousness of our court; between Peter the Great and the *roués* of the Regency, there was nothing in common save licentiousness, — refined in the one, brutal in the other. Two features deserve remembrance in history, — the burst of admiration that escaped the Czar before the tomb of the Cardinal de Richelieu; and the step attempted with Peter, by the Faculty of Theology, on the occasion of his visit to the Church of the Sorbonne, where the great minister reposes. The doctors of the Sorbonne presented to the Czar a memorial on the union of the Greek and Latin churches, in which they undertook to set up the Gallican Church as a mediator between the Ultramontanes and the Greeks. Their memorial was devoid neither of learning nor of specious arguments; but Peter, who had little religion except that sort of fatalistic faith very common among geniuses of action, could only be touched by political arguments.[2] He was not the man to ab-

[1] He had, moreover, a great desire to see France; and would have gone thither during his first stay in Holland, had not the government of Louis XIV. received too coldly the insinuations which he had caused to be made on the subject.

[2] "Peter had little or no religion: he regarded it as an instrument of government of which it was necessary to be the master. It was for this reason that he made himself his own patriarch, according to the advice, it is said, of King William."—*Mém. du duc*

Digitized by Google

dicate the absolute power which he had arrogated to himself over spiritual as over temporal things by absorbing the Church in the State.[1]

Peter had come to Paris to practise diplomacy, and not theology. He clearly laid down his propositions, which were discussed between his ministers and the Marshals d'Huxelles and de Tessé in behalf of the Regent. "Sweden has fallen; Russia has taken her place in Europe: let France grant to Russia the subsidies that she gave to Sweden, and guarantee to Russia the conquests of the latter on the Baltic; Russia will guarantee to France the treaties of Utrecht and Baden, and will insure to her, with her alliance, that of Poland and of Prussia. France will have nothing more to fear from Austria: as to England, the Czar does not ask France to break her engagements; but if, later, a rupture should occur, Russia will suffice to supply the place of England, as well as of Sweden, to France."

There was much shrewdness, and some boasting, in this *frankness*. The Czar spoke of Prussia and Poland as two satellites at his discretion. Now, Poland, wholly disorganized as it was, was not so completely abandoned to him as he would have had it believed, and had refused him all assistance in his campaign of 1711 against the Turks: as to Prussia, she had not waited for his mediation to ally herself to France by a secret treaty of September 14, 1716. Prussia had guaranteed the treaties of Utrecht and Baden, and promised to use her interest to prevent the Empire, in any case, from declaring war against France: France had promised to procure the cession to Prussia of Stettin, the capital of Pomerania, which Frederick I. had taken from the Swedes, and, if Sweden refused this cession, not to aid her, but to pay, on the contrary, a subsidy of five hundred thousand crowns to Prussia. This remarkable compact, which restored to France a base of operations in Germany against Austria, returned to the policy of the treaty of Westphalia, formed a slight counterpoise to the new English alliance, and was destined to make its influence felt during forty years. Dubois had had no part in it;

d'Antin, cited by Lémontei, t. I. p. 114. The Duke d'Antin had, in some sort, done the honors of Paris to the Czar. Peter did not precisely make himself patriarch; but he abolished the patriarchate, replacing it by a *Holy Synod* of fourteen prelates, who took an oath of unbounded obedience to the Czar.

[1] On his return to Russia, fearing, apparently, that his subjects might suspect him of having become Latinized by travelling among the Latins, he instituted a burlesque ceremony in the style of our Fools' Festivals of the Middle Ages, in which the Pope and the Cardinals were made the subjects of gross buffoonery.

Digitized by Google

and the negotiator had been the Marshal d'Huxelles, the head of the Council of Foreign Affairs.[1]

The Regent had been more embarrassed than satisfied, both with the journey and the propositions of the Czar: he was afraid, above every thing, of giving umbrage to England. He eluded all compromising or onerous pledges. The negotiation was protracted. The Czar did not await its issue, but set out from Paris, June 21, for the North, carrying with him at once an admiration of our civilization, and the belief that it was hastening to its decline through luxury and effeminacy. The parleys were transferred to Holland, that universal theatre of negotiations: they ended, August 15, in a treaty between France, Russia, and Prussia. These nations engaged to guarantee the treaties of Utrecht and Baden, as well as those which might be concluded for the peace of the North between Russia, Prussia, and Sweden; agreed to appoint commissioners to prepare a treaty of commerce; and promised, but vaguely, mutual aid in case of attack. The Czar and the King of Prussia engaged to accept the mediation of France between themselves and Sweden; and France promised not to renew the treaty of subsidy with Sweden which expired in 1718.

In consequence of this treaty, France kept, for the first time, an ambassador and a consul in Russia.[2] The Czar, by the entreaty of the Regent, at last consented to withdraw his troops from Mecklenburg, and to suspend his designs, at least premature, on Germany.

These new relations, which were one day to have such important consequences, gave the Regent little anxiety. His chief thought was to avoid all commotion that might shake his power, and consequently to maintain peace in the West, despite the reciprocal animosity of Austria and Spain. This peace was not so difficult to preserve, at least for some time, as might have been believed: France, England, and Holland were fully in a condition to impose respect for the treaty of Utrecht on the two rival States. Alberoni, whatever may be said, was striving, as long as he could, to postpone the struggle; and the Emperor had just entered, moreover, into a serious war, which obliged him to suspend his projects for the invasion of Italy. The Turks, the conquerors of Peter the Great in 1711, instead of following up their successes

[1] Flassan, *Hist. de la Diplomatie française*, t. V. p. 375.
[2] See the whole negotiation in Flassan, t. IV. pp. 383–397.

Digitized by Google

against the Russians, had fallen back, in 1715, on the Venetian possessions of Greece, rapidly reconquered the Morea, invaded Illyria and the Ionian Isles, and caused dismay in Italy by their movements in the Adriatic. The Emperor had been induced to make a diversion, by the way of Hungary, in favor of the Venetians, by a promise indirectly obtained from Spain, through the medium of the Pope, that the Spanish government would not break the truce in Italy during the war against the Infidels. Spain had done more: she had sent on her side, to the aid of the Venetians, a squadron that had contributed to raise the siege of Corfu.

Unhappily, there was neither impartiality nor fidelity in the governments of England and France. The treaty by which the Emperor and King George had guaranteed to each other what they "might acquire by common agreement"[1] was already a tacit violation of the peace of Utrecht. As to the Regent, and, above all, his instigator, Dubois, they were unwilling that Spain should strengthen herself either by peace or arms, and thought only of overthrowing the minister who was raising this country from a century of ruin. It was at the expense of Spain and Italy that it was designed to maintain peace, by modifying the treaty of Utrecht in favor of the Emperor. Charles of Austria absolutely insisted on Sicily in exchange for Sardinia: George had promised it to him, and the Regent had secretly ratified the promise. To join Sicily to Naples was to give Austria the central Mediterranean, and the means of creating a navy. The King of Spain was injured indirectly by the increase of strength granted to his enemy, and directly by the loss of the reversion of Sicily, promised him by the treaty of Utrecht in case of the extinction of the House of Savoy.

The Regent endeavored to dazzle Philip V., and to extort his consent by some promises relative to the interests of his children by the second marriage, and the hope of recovering Gibraltar.[1] He attempted to overthrow Alberoni by an intrigue which was very badly conducted, and which wholly failed of success. A more serious negotiation was then undertaken. France and England showed themselves disposed to guarantee to the children of Philip V. and Elizabeth Farnese the reversion of the duchies of Parma and Tuscany, on condition that Spain would consent to the

[1] Louville, who was sent on this matter to Spain in July, 1716, pretends that George I. had authorized the offer of Gibraltar. This is devoid of all probability. At most, some vague speech of Lord Stanhope may have authorized him to employ this lure. — See *Mém. de Louville*, t. II. pp. 192–224.

Digitized by Google

transfer of Sicily to the hands of Charles VI.; and that the children of Philip V., in case the reversion should expire, would hold the duchies as a fief of the Emperor.[1] The fate of Mantua and Montferrat had shown how Austria defined the imperial suzerainty. Italy was entirely delivered over to the Emperor by this scheme. This was absolute treason to the interests of France.[2] As to England, her political profit from it was a very questionable one, and she would have done better to have accepted the commercial advantages lately granted her by Spain; but George I. was, in this as in every thing, the Elector of Hanover and the vassal of the Emperor, rather than the King of Great Britain.

Spain refused: nevertheless, as the project of the Triple Alliance concerning Sicily did not seem near execution, Alberoni continued to gain time, while arming forces, by the aid of a tax levied on the clergy of Spain by the Pope's permission. The Holy Father thought that the expedition would be employed against the Turks; and Alberoni had just exacted the cardinal's hat as the price of Spanish intervention in the *holy war*. A wholly secondary incident precipitated the events which Alberoni was striving to postpone. The Grand Inquisitor of Spain, in returning from Rome to his own country, took a fancy to pass through Milanais: he had no imperial safe conduct; and the Austrian government arrested him as a rebellious subject of *Carlos III., King of Spain* (the end of May, 1717). This insult exasperated Philip V.: he declared to his minister that he would instantly avenge the honor of his crown. All the representations of Alberoni were useless;[3] and this great statesman, in obedience to a monarch incapable of understanding him, saw himself constrained to stake, in the most madly rash adventures, his renown, and the reviving fortunes of the nation to which he had consecrated himself. He had as yet at hand only the nucleus of a fleet and an army. He induced the King, at least, not to invade

[1] It was detrimental to a third party, the Pope; for the duchy of Parma had been under the papal jurisdiction during the last two centuries.

[2] We cannot understand how any one can attempt to-day to rehabilitate such a policy. — See the two articles of M. de Carné on the Regency, in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, June 1–15, 1858.

[3] W. Coxe; *Histoire d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. II. p. 327 *et seq.* The letter of Alberoni to the Duke de Popoli against immediate war attests how far most historians, and writers of memoirs, have been or are still mistaken concerning Alberoni. — See also, on this subject, a very interesting conversation of the Marquis d'Argenson and the Cardinal de Polignac, in the *Mém. du Marquis d'Argenson*, t. I. p. 61, 1857.

Digitized by Google

Naples or Sicily immediately with forces so insufficient, but to content himself, for this year, with Sardinia. Nine thousand Spaniards landed in Sardinia, August 22, 1717, and conquered this island in two months and a half, owing to the support of the population, speedily disgusted with the harsh Austrian rule.

This was a dangerous success, which did not dazzle Alberoni. The Emperor, victorious over the Turks by the sword of Eugene at Peterwardein and Belgrade, but unable as yet to dispose freely of his forces, had appealed to the Triple Alliance against the violators of the neutrality of Italy. Alberoni strove to appease England by new commercial advances, and by protesting that his master only wished to prevent the subjugation of Italy by the Emperor; but, at the same time, he made incredible efforts to prepare Spain to sustain the contest. He continued to levy the tax on the clergy, braving the prohibitions and anger of the Pope, — a thing unheard of in the country of the Inquisition. Loans, taxes on the rich, gratuities, the retrenchment of every kind of luxury at the court, furnished him other resources. Founderies, dock-yards, and manufactories of arms, sprang up on every side: munitions and rigging were purchased in Holland and everywhere. The inert body of Spain was galvanized entire by the electric power of this indomitable will. An army sprang from the earth. Even Aragon and Catalonia rallied to the support of that government which they detested the day before.

The habitual hypochondria of Philip V. degenerated, meanwhile, into nervous fever; and disease well-nigh carried off the gloomy monarch, and with him Alberoni and all his plans; for the grandees of Spain, and the members of the councils, who hated the Italian minister as they had hated the French ministers in the time of Louis XIV., were already preparing to refuse the Regency to the Queen, and to expel her confidant. Philip recovered: a few of the grandees, nevertheless, continued the intrigues which they had concocted with the Regent of France, and projected nothing less than to seize the King, to hold him in custody as deprived of reason, and to govern in the name of his eldest son. The Regent, as early as the autumn of 1717, had ordered a large body of troops to advance to the frontier to be in readiness to enter at the first call.[1] The grandees dared not stir; and the adversaries of Spain prepared more effective weapons. Negotiations were opened at London between the Triple Alliance and the

[1] *Mém. de Noailles*, p. 271.

Digitized by Google

Emperor, in which Dubois, become a member of the Council of Foreign Affairs, represented France. The excess of the Austrian pretensions lengthened the parleys: the Regent, unwilling to appear to sacrifice Philip V. entirely, demanded some concessions for him. King George himself feared the dissatisfaction of English commerce, should he break too easily with Spain. At Paris, therefore, and even at London, recourse to the sword would have gladly been avoided; yet war seemed inevitable at the end of what was about to be done. A remnant of shame and nationality for a moment arrested the Regent: Dubois and Stanhope hastened to Paris, and overruled his hesitation. Preliminary agreements were signed at Paris, July 18, 1718, between France and England. It was provided in these that the Emperor should renounce for himself and his successors all claims to Spain and the East Indies; and that Philip V. should abandon all claims to the ancient Spanish provinces, of which the Emperor was in possession, as well as to the reversion of Sicily; that Sicily should revert to the Emperor, and that the Kingdom of Sardinia should be given in exchange to the House of Savoy; that the Emperor should promise the eventual investiture of Parma and Tuscany to the children of the Queen of Spain; and that, provisionally, Leghorn, Porto Ferrajo, Parma, and Plaisance should be occupied by Swiss garrisons in the pay of the mediating powers. Three months, dating from the ratification of the Emperor, were granted to the King of Spain and the King of Sicily (the Duke of Savoy) to accept the compromise: this term passed, they were to be constrained thereto by force.[1]

This compact, which was about to arm France in behalf of her enemies against her natural allies, and to raise up the Pyrenees, thrown down by Louis XIV. at the cost of so much blood and suffering, was not accepted without repugnance by the Council of the Regency. The Marshal d'Huxelles stormed, and protested that, rather than sign it, he would cut off his hand. The Regent merely threatened to deprive him of the presidency of the Council of Foreign Affairs, and he signed it! Four or five members of the

[1] Was it at this epoch that Dubois received a pension from King George, with the assent of the Regent, it is affirmed? — See Lémontei, t. I. p. 426. The fact is taken for granted in the contemporary diplomacy. Saint-Simon pretends that the pension was a million. Lémontei speaks of fifty thousand crowns: the Marquis d'Argenson, one of the successors of Dubois in foreign affairs, says, in his Memoirs, that it was a hundred thousand crowns; that it was transferred after Dubois to Madame de Prie, then to M. de Marville; and that it did not cease till the accession of M. de Chauvelin to the ministry. — *Mém.* t. III. p. 235.

Digitized by Google

Council of the Regency, among whom were the Duke du Maine and Villeroi, protested more or less warmly; but their interested and personal enmity against Philippe of Orleans took away from them the merit of their opposition: a single one, perhaps, acted through patriotism, — Villars. The greater part of those present sadly referred the decision "to the wisdom of the Regent:" a few had the courage to approve it, among them Torci, the last minister that had directed foreign affairs under the Great King. Characters were deteriorating under the deleterious influence of the epoch: we no longer recognize the men who had figured with honor in the times of Louis XIV. Despotism had ill prepared men to shine by themselves when the glorious despot whom they served had disappeared.[1]

The preliminary agreement was converted into a treaty at London, August 2: the plenipotentiary of the Emperor signed it with the representatives of France and England. Holland abstained from signing, shrinking from the pledge to make war on Spain. It was on the part of the Emperor himself that difficulties arose! Turkey, bowing her head under the two cruel defeats that had ruined her military reputation and shaken her empire, had just purchased, at Passarowitz, a truce for twenty-four years, by ceding to Austria Temesvar, and what remained to her on the north of the Danube, Belgrade, the key of the Sub-Danubian countries, the western part of Wallachia and Servia, and a portion of Bosnia and Croatia (July 21, 1718). Austria, gorged with booty, had, at this price, left to Turkey the spoils of others; and Venice, the defence of which had been the pretext of the war, completely abandoned by its ally in the negotiations, had not recovered the Morea. When the Emperor felt his hands free, he was no longer willing to send a renunciation of the throne of Spain in the terms agreed upon. Dubois saw his work ready to fall. He acted a tragic part: he wrote everywhere that he was about to commit sui-

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 141, ap. the MS. Memoirs of the Duke d'Antin; *Mém. de Villars*, p. 246; Dumont, t. VII. part i. p. 531. M. de Torci, whom we are astonished to see thus contradicting all his precedents, had founded, in 1712, a useful institution, which the Regent dropped: this was, under the name of the *Political Academy*, a school of diplomacy, where young men were instructed by able masters in all the sciences necessary for the diplomatic career. On leaving the school, they were to become secretaries of legation. The organization was too aristocratic through the conditions exacted of the pupils; but the principle was excellent. — See Flassan, t. IV. p. 374. To our great disadvantage, we are still destitute of any institution of this kind; the plans of the Provisional Government of 1848 to this effect having been since abandoned.

Digitized by Google

cide, and to carry with him to the tomb the peace of Europe.[1] The Emperor finally understood that it was necessary to sacrifice pride to interest, and yielded. The cabinets of France and England, still agitated by the emotion they had experienced, secretly agreed to restrain him, whatever might happen, within the limits of the treaty (November 30, 1718): the Regent designed at least to set bounds to the evil that he consented to do.

Alberoni had striven to oppose coalition to coalition. He had sought allies at the extremities of Europe to replace the natural ally that abandoned Spain: resuming the thread of the intrigues formed as early as 1716 by an agent of Charles XII., he had endeavored to reconcile the Czar and the King of Sweden, and to associate them in a descent on Scotland in behalf of the Pretender; he had attempted to prevent the Turks from concluding the treaty of Passarowitz, and to foment a new insurrection in Hungary by means of the illustrious exile, Rakoczi; he had, lastly, allied himself secretly to the Du Maines and their friends, the discontented nobility of Brittany, and all the adversaries of the Regent in France and of King George in England, and had not been without influence in the virulent opposition which was manifested in 1718 by the parliament of Paris. All this ended in nothing: the Turks knew no better than usual how to profit by the diversions that were offered them in the West. The Regent broke down the opposition of the parliament and the Duke du Maine by the bed of justice of August 26;[2] and it was impossible to unite Charles XII. and Peter the Great, — the one wishing to keep his conquests on the Baltic, and the other being unwilling to cede them. It is wrong, however, to see in the plans of Alberoni only gigantic visions conceived *à priori* by an ill-regulated imagination: they were simply the efforts of a man, who, feeling the nearest and most natural prop[3] broken in his hand, sought dangerous or impossible ones afar with despairing energy.

A last attempt had been made to induce Spain to submit. The English minister Stanhope, accustomed to negotiate all great diplomatic affairs by himself, had repaired to Madrid, and had talked of restoring Gibraltar on certain conditions. If the offer this time was serious, if it was true that the Hanoverian King was mad enough to be willing to make to the interests of Austria

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 144.

[2] See *ante*, p. 41.

[3] We do not pretend that Philip V. and his wife were not first in fault; but neither do we admit that this justifies the assumption of hostilities against Spain.

Digitized by Google

a sacrifice which might have cost him his throne, Alberoni should have used every effort to wring a consent from Philip V.[1] However it may be, the Spanish government listened to nothing. At the moment that Lord Stanhope reached Madrid, Alberoni had just struck a second blow, much more exciting than the conquest of Sardinia. Three hundred transports, escorted by twenty-two men-of-war, had, July 1, landed thirty thousand Spaniards at the gates of Palermo.[2] This time, Austria was not directly attacked by Spain, for Sicily was still occupied by the officers of King Victor Amadeus; but Alberoni wished first of all to seize upon the object of the quarrel, reserving the right of indemnifying Victor Amadeus in Lombardy at the expense of the Emperor. Victor Amadeus, sure of losing Sicily in any case, had already withdrawn the greater part of his troops. The Piedmontese, few in numbers, seeing the people and the clergy turn against them, — the one on account of the weight of the taxes, the other because of the violation of immunities, — rapidly evacuated almost the whole island, and concentrated themselves in the citadel of Messina.[3] The Austrians were already trembling in Naples, when twenty English vessels appeared on the coast, and proceeded towards Messina. The English admiral, Byng, proposed to the general of the Spanish army a suspension of hostilities in Sicily. The Spaniard refused. Byng then advanced towards the Spanish fleet, which retired slowly at his approach, not yet knowing whether he came as an enemy. No signification, no declaration of war, had taken place. Byng came up with the Spanish fleet off Syracuse (August 11), crowded it against the coast, and attacked it before it had even been able to form in line of battle. The unfortunate fleet, imperfectly equipped, and manned by sailors as brave as inexperienced, was annihilated: only four vessels escaped out of twenty-two. A few hours of a premature collision had sufficed to crush this reviving navy.

Some one at Paris learned of this news with more satisfaction than any one at London. Dubois shocked good citizens by his

[1] W. Coxe, *Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. II. p. 428; t. III. ch. xxxi.

[2] Alberoni had had a much bolder project; namely, to attempt, with this army, a descent on England in the name of the Pretender. England was very scantily supplied with regular troops, and unaccustomed to arms; and this temerity might have had some chance of success, at least at the first moment. The feeble Philip V. could not understand that this was striking at the heart of the coalition, and insisted that the attack should be made on Sicily.

[3] W. Coxe, *Espagne*, etc., t. II. p. 414.

Digitized by Google

shameless joy, who felt that the liberty of the seas and the balance of power in Europe had just been attacked with Spain. The disaster of Syracuse made him minister (September 24). The indefatigable Stanhope hastened anew to Paris to secure the appointment of Dubois to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. George I. hastened to write to Dubois a letter of congratulation through another minister, Mr. Craggs. "The King," wrote Craggs, "commands me to tell you that this is the best news that he has received for a long time. . . . For once, I expect to see the same interests cultivated in both kingdoms, and that there will be henceforth but one and the same ministry."—"If I followed only the impulse of my gratitude," Dubois replied, "I should take the liberty of writing to His Britannic Majesty to thank him for the place which His Highness the Regent has bestowed on me." And a few days after, in a letter to Stanhope, "I owe to you even the place I occupy, which I ardently desire to use according to your wishes; that is, for the service of His Britannic Majesty, whose interests will always be sacred to me." [1]

Dubois hastened to pay his initiation fee. Although the pride and interest of the rulers of the sea might be flattered by the destruction of a foreign naval force, English commerce was so much opposed to the rupture with Spain, that the government of George I. had thought itself obliged to represent the battle of Syracuse as an accident, a fortuitous encounter; and dared not declare war, after having so rudely waged it, without being sure that the Regent of France would issue a similar declaration. The Regent was fully pledged to this by the treaty of London; but he shrank before public opinion, and felt that there was serious danger in declaring that he was about to make war for Austria against the grandson of Louis XIV. A pretext was needed: Dubois undertook to furnish it.

Some months previous, the Duchess du Maine had entered into correspondence with Alberoni through the medium of the Prince de Cellamare, the Spanish ambassador at Paris. A plot, or rather the plan of a plot, was secretly agitated among the Duchess and her auxiliaries, among whom were a waiting-maid, who has left some witty memoirs,[2] a few ruined noblemen, and an intriguing abbé. The only important personage was the Cardinal de Polignac, a bosom friend of the Duchess, and a conspirator through complaisance. Great projects were meditated, — the Regent was to

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 153.

[2] *Mém. de madame de Staal-Delaunai, Collect. Michaud, troisième série,* t. X.

Digitized by Google

be carried off by surprise, and Philip V. was to claim the Regency, convoke the States-General, etc.: all this had no solid foundation; and the means employed only attest that the little court of Sceaux, more decent than that of the Palais-Royal, was not more honest at the bottom. The conspirators succeeded only in decoying a few officers into the service of Spain: there was no real agitation except at a single point, — among the Breton nobility. The plot had no chance of success except through the coöperation of the parliaments; but, the parliament of Paris having given way before the bed of justice of August 26, all support failed. The plot could lead its authors to nothing: it led their enemies to their aim. Dubois suspected and watched the intrigues at Sceaux. The folly of the conspirators furnished him the proofs he sought: they took a fancy to cause several documents which they sent to Alberoni to be transcribed by a copyist, a stranger to their cabal, a poor writer of the Bibliothèque Royale, who, terrified, informed Dubois of every thing. The documents were sent in the charge of a young Spanish abbé; but, on reaching Poitiers, the abbé saw a party of grenadiers enter his room and seize his despatches (December 5). Four days afterwards, the Spanish ambassador was arrested as a violator of the law of nations. After Cellamare, the Duchess du Maine and her husband, almost a stranger to intrigues too bold for his temperament, were arrested; then all who had directly or indirectly been concerned in the affair. The Bastille, Vincennes, and the Conciergerie were filled with pretended conspirators. The commotion was immense. Public opinion, shaken, turned for a moment against these promoters of civil war, — against this Spanish minister who wished to overthrow France: it was not known that Alberoni had only retaliated on the Regent.[1] The letters which Philip V. addressed to the minor King and the parliaments, and which were circulated through France, were prohibited, as seditious libels, by those very parliaments so unfriendly to the Regent. Dubois eagerly seized on the occasion: the war, proposed to the Council of the Regency, was voted by it unanimously, and declared, January 10, 1719. England had already issued her declaration, December 27. Holland at length decided, February 16, to accede to the treaty of London, upon new concessions made at the expense of French commerce.

The end attained, the rigor that had been shown the prisoners was relaxed. The Spanish ambassador was sent back to his country, and the captivity of the others inculpated was greatly softened.

[1] See *ante*, p. 82.

Digitized by Google

France once thoroughly enlisted against Spain, this whole affair, which had seemed to promise to the archives of the parliament a great judicial tragedy, was dropped; and the government contented itself with wringing from the leading members of the cabal confessions and prayers which covered them with shame and ridicule. The Duchess du Maine, after conspiring like a stage-heroine, begged pardon like a child. All obtained it, she and the rest; and there was not at least a drop of blood shed upon the scaffold.[1]

But blood flowed elsewhere: it flowed in a struggle in which the success of France, devoid of glory to her, profited none but her enemies disguised as allies.

In the course of April, 1719, a French division crossed the Bidassoa, rapidly carried the little posts of the frontier, and pushed on to the port of Passage, the principal maritime settlement of Alberoni on the sea-coast. The unfinished forts that protected the new dock-yards and the arsenal, occupied by a handful of men, were easily carried. Six men-of-war were found in process of construction, and materials for twenty more. All were given to the flames, according to the promise of Dubois to the English; an impudent contradiction to the mild manifesto in which the Regent had announced that he made war, not on Spain, but on a minister, the disturber of the repose of Europe.[2]

The main body of the army, in all forty thousand strong, crossed the frontier soon afterwards, and entered upon the blockade, then the siege of Fontarabia, under the command of Marshal Berwick. The bastard Stuart, the conqueror of Almanza, 'was about to fight in behalf of the foreigner that occupied his father's and brother's throne, against the monarch whose crown he had formerly saved. This harsh and selfish general, whose character has been too much extolled, showed on this decisive occasion only the spirit of a *condottiere* without compassion or country. Fontarabia capitulated June 16–18. Philip V. had advanced almost within sight of the place with the Queen and Alberoni. He was not in a condition to succor the besieged town by open force: the main body of the Spanish troops was in Sicily, heroically defending its conquest against the floods of Imperialists which the English vessels were incessantly vomiting forth on the Sicilian shores; a division of five or six thousand men had, besides, been

[1] See the well-digested abstract of what is emphatically called the *Conspiracy of Cellamare*, in Lémontei, t. I. ch. vii.; t. II. p. 399, *et seq.*

[2] This manifesto was the work of Fontenelle. The relations of this writer — this eminent philosopher — with Dubois are a stain on his memory.

Digitized by Google

embarked in Galicia to attempt the diversion against England of which Alberoni had dreamed the year before on a much larger scale, and which had no longer any serious chance of success. Philip V. had scarcely fifteen thousand men at hand; but he imagined that the French soldiers would not draw the sword against the grandson of Louis XIV., who came to them with fleurs de lis on his banners, and that the two armies would become one at the first encounter. He was mistaken. The French army marched with repugnance, but it marched: the soldiers were restrained by discipline; the leaders were gorged with the gold that the System attracted to the coffers of the Regent. Philip, discouraged, fell back on Pampeluna, then returned sadly to Madrid. Meanwhile, Berwick besieged Saint Sebastian. An English squadron was cruising in the Bay of Biscay; and an English commissioner, Stanhope, a relative of the minister, had arrived at the camp: it was he that gave the orders; Berwick only executed them. There was still a dock-yard of some importance on this coast, at Santoña. Stanhope exacted the embarkation of French troops on the English vessels to burn three ships of the line in process of construction, and materials for seven others at Santoña, "in order," wrote Berwick to the Regent (August 8), "that the English government may be able to show to the next parliament that nothing had been neglected to diminish the navy of Spain."[1]

France was now at the point where England had been when Charles II. sold himself to Louis XIV., and even lower.

The army felt and showed so little zeal, that, after having taken the town of Saint Sebastian (August 1), Berwick would have raised the siege of the citadel, had not the destruction of the storehouses of provisions by the bombs induced the garrison to surrender (August 19).

There was not the force necessary to besiege so large a place as Pampeluna; and, besides, there were no vessels here to destroy. It was decided to repair to Catalonia by the French side of the Pyrenees. Berwick entered Cerdagne, took Urgel (October 2–12), then moved against the maritime town of Rosas. A tempest wrecked or sunk the greater part of the small coasting-vessels (*tartanes*) which were conveying the artillery and munitions to the camp (November 6). Berwick did not believe himself able to continue the attack, and brought back his troops to Roussillon.

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 268.

Digitized by Google

France had expended eighty-two millions[1] to destroy works to which she should have given all her encouragement and support; but England and Dubois had attained their end. Alberoni had been unsuccessful everywhere. A tempest had dispersed the squadron that he had sent against England; and the English had avenged themselves for this menace by carrying fire and sword to the coasts of Galicia, and destroying there two more ships of the line and a large quantity of materials. The army of Sicily, which it was impossible to reënforce, lost ground, despite its exploits and even its victories, against enemies continually springing up anew.[2] The movements in Brittany had given a last hope to the Spanish minister: these movements had other causes than the petty intrigues of Madame du Maine, and had not ceased after the discovery of the conspiracy of Cellamare. The States of Brittany having been dissolved in 1718, in consequence of a protest of the nobility against the new entry duties,— a protest registered by the parliament of Rennes, — and several members of the States having been exiled, the malecontents had attempted to reply by a confederation in the Polish style, and had circulated during the winter an Act of Union, in which every nobleman who refused his coöperation was declared infamous, and degraded from the nobility. In the spring, bands began to form in the forest; public treasuries were carried off; and the *confederates* opened communication with Philip V.: but the towns refused all participation in the rebellion, and the body of the peasants refused *to enter the forest*, to use the expression employed by the leaders in their correspondence to designate enlistment in the insurrection. The Breton peasants would have fought for their priests, had a religious question been involved: they did not fight for their nobles. The noblemen, left alone, were dispersed by a few soldiers; and when a squadron, the last relic of the naval forces of Spain, appeared at last on the coast of Brittany, towards the end of October, it found, instead of an insurgent province, only a few fugitives hastening to it to seek a refuge. A great number of noblemen were taken and indicted, not before the parliament of Rennes, too suspicious to the Regent, and which was being purged at this very moment, but before a commission in session at Rennes, under the name of the Royal Chamber. The Regent was not so clement, this time, as towards Madame du Maine and her accomplices:

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 275. Eighty-two millions at sixty francs per mark; a little less than seventy-four millions of our money.

[2] The Regent paid a subsidy to the Austrian army!

Digitized by Google

four of the rebel nobles were decapitated; sixteen others were condemned, as contumacious, to the same punishment; the rest were pardoned after a captivity of some duration.[1]

The continuance of the contest became impossible to Spain. The French invasion was about to recommence with the year 1720; and the English were preparing for an attack on Spanish America. Alberoni, in his exasperation against the French government, wished to attempt to treat with England and Austria without France; but the French and English cabinets were pledged to make his overthrow the first condition of peace. He had not time, moreover, to learn of the reception received by his agent at London. Intrigue completed against him what arms had commenced. Dubois gained over the confessor of Philip V., the French Jesuit Daubenton, by promises in favor of his order; and Queen Elizabeth herself, the protector of Alberoni, by threatening no longer to guarantee Parma and Tuscany to her children. Philip V. was deceived by every means: letters were shown him, written by Alberoni to Italy, in which the latter blamed in disrespectful terms the war imposed on him by the passions of his master; and the most extravagant suspicions were insinuated to the weak monarch against his minister. December 5, Alberoni received orders to quit Madrid within a week, and Spain within three weeks. Philip V. requested of the Regent a passport authorizing the disgraced minister to pass through the south of France on his way to Italy. Alberoni left Spain wavering between her aversion to all foreign rule and a confused consciousness of what she was losing. In the French provinces through which he passed, the people gave him a sympathetic welcome which attested the unpopularity of the Regency. He wished to remain in Liguria: the vengeance of the Pope and the ingratitude of the court of Spain pursued him thither. Clement XI. claimed the right to bring him to trial as an enemy of the Catholic faith; and Philip V. and his wife had the perfidy to furnish to the Holy Father the bases of the indictment against the minister who was guilty only of having too energetically served his masters. The extradition of Alberoni was demanded of the senate of Genoa by Clement XI., supported by Philip V., the Regent, and the Emperor. The Genoese nobly refused. Alberoni reached the Swiss Alps, where he remained concealed until the death of

[1] Lémontei, t. I. ch. vii. An interesting work on these affairs in Brittany has recently been published. — See *Conjuration de Pontcallec*, ap. *Révue de Bretagne et de Vendée*, January, 1857, February and April, 1858.

Digitized by Google

the Holy Father. After many vicissitudes, he reëntered the Sacred College, sheltered by the common interest of the cardinals in defending the inviolability of the red hat. His part was finished! Too many powerful interests were united in debarring his return to the political stage; but he lived long enough to see some of his plans realized by others, and the Austrians expelled, at least, from Lower Italy.[1]

Alberoni fallen, Spain bowed her head. February 17, 1720, the ambassador from Spain to Holland signed the treaty of London. The Emperor was put in possession of Sicily; the Ex-King of Sicily became the King of Sardinia. He did not gain by the exchange, but he was not in a condition to refuse his consent: Sardinia remained thenceforth in the House of Savoy. The children of the Queen of Spain had the reversion of Parma and Tuscany.

The policy of the Regent, so anti-national in the south of Europe, was less injurious in the north, where an effort was made to save Sweden, ruined,[2] depopulated, and incapable of longer resisting her numerous enemies, had not the diversity of their interests permitted the successful intervention of diplomacy among them. The heroic and insensate Charles XII. had perished at the siege of Frederickshall (December 18, 1718) while striving to wrest Norway from the King of Denmark in order to indemnify himself for his losses. His death had caused the breaking-out of a reaction against the monarchy, which was making Sweden so harshly expiate the glory with which it had loaded her: the Senate had reëstablished the ancient aristocratic government, and had conferred only by the right of election an almost nominal royalty on the Princess Ulrica, the younger sister of Charles XII.; setting aside the son of the eldest sister, the Duke of Holstein. This revolution rendered Sweden no stronger against her enemies without, as was seen by the horrible ravages which a Russian expedition, landed in Sweden, exercised with impunity, in 1719, to the very gates of Stockholm.[3] French diplomacy made the new

[1] W. Coxe, *L'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. II. ch. xxx.; Lémontei, t. I. pp. 278–286. Lémontei does not seem to us to show his usual sagacity where Alberoni is concerned: the Englishman, Coxe, has better appreciated the celebrated minister, to whom the Marquis d'Argenson renders justice in his Memoirs.

[2] The only money in use was copper tokens, which were made a legal tender for one hundred and eighty-eight times their real value.

[3] Peter the Great boasted of having destroyed in six weeks, in this descent, worthy of the Huns or Vandals, eight towns, one hundred and forty-one castles, one thousand three hundred and sixty-one villages or hamlets, twenty-six large magazines, sixteen

Digitized by Google

Swedish government comprehend that it must submit to the harsh law of events, and surrender the greater part of the possessions foreign to Scandinavia. The duchies of Bremen and Verden were therefore ceded to Hanover in consideration of one million rix-dollars (six million francs) (November 28, 1719); then Stettin and a portion of Pomerania to Prussia for a like sum (January 21, 1720): Denmark, on the contrary, received six hundred thousand rix-dollars for restoring her conquests to Sweden (June 3, 1720). France secretly gave the money to England, who gave it publicly to Denmark, and who had all the credit of it. Denmark kept what she had taken from that same Duke of Holstein who had just been set aside from the Swedish succession. France and England guaranteed to the crown of Denmark the duchy of Schleswig (June 14, 1720). The peace most difficult to conclude was with Russia. Sweden could not resolve to sacrifice her rich provinces on the Eastern Baltic. She was forced at last to yield. England, after having lured Sweden to her aid, supported her but feebly: she had judged that the establishment of the Russians on the Baltic would open to her commerce the interior of their vast empire. Sweden abandoned Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, and Carelia, the southern border of Finland. The Czar restored the rest of what he had conquered in Finland, and paid two million rix-dollars to the Swedish government: this was his only concession to the French mediator (August 30, 1721). All these compromises had cost France eight millions. After the treaty of Nystad, which sanctioned the progress of the Russian power, all Europe was at peace.

The Czar, after solemnly assuming the title of *Emperor*, — a title which disclosed the audacious hope of one day reviving the Empire of the East at Constantinople, — renewed his attempts to ally himself with France: he offered the hand of his second daughter (afterwards the Czarina Elizabeth) to the Duke de Chartres, the Regent's son, with the promise to place the Duke de Chartres on the throne of Poland after Augustus II. King Augustus, whose vigor was proverbial, was only fifty: the chance appeared very remote to the Regent; and the proposition, which was of a nature to disturb England, and could not suit Dubois, was suffered to fall to the ground.[1]

In the North, in short, there was nothing better to be done than

mines, etc. — Lémontei, t. I. p. 290. All the succeeding treaties are in Dumont, t. VII. part ii.

[1] Lémontei, t. I. p. 292.

Digitized by Google

to save, as far as possible, the wrecks of Sweden. But it was in the relations with Turkey that the policy of Dubois showed itself truly ignominious. At the moment when Russia, wrested from its stagnant barbarism by such rude means, was noisily forcing its way into European society, the Ottoman Porte was more quietly making a first attempt in the same direction. A man of rare intelligence and lofty character, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim, had comprehended the causes of the late reverses of his nation, and wished to avert their return, not by the reawakening of Mahometan fanaticism, thenceforth powerless against Christian discipline, but by the initiation of Turkey into the arts of the West, and by its entrance into the system of the European balance of power. France was the only great Continental nation whose interests were in conformity with those of the Ottoman Empire; and the force of events, in spite of mutual prejudices, had unceasingly drawn the two States towards each other for the last two centuries. It was, therefore, to France that Ibrahim addressed himself to prepare the means of restraining Austria and Russia. The haughty usages of the Porte, that received ambassadors and sent none, had already given way before the Austrian arms: Ibrahim caused them to give way before France, and despatched to the Regent a solemn embassay, which brought, as a courteous advance, the permission to repair the Latin Church of the Holy Sepulchre fallen to ruin, — a permission long solicited in vain by the Great King (March, 1721). The ambassador should have been welcomed with open arms: he was received with extreme coldness. This time it was no longer England alone, but also the Emperor and the Pope, whose distrust was to be averted. Dubois was not satisfied with a single foreign master: he had given himself others for private interests of which we shall speak directly. The Ottoman ambassador was not even able to broach the true object of his mission. He made a proposal which did honor to his government, — to put an end to the double piracy of the Barbary corsairs against the Christians, and the Knights of Malta against the Mahometans. He obtained nothing: it would have offended the court of Rome, which clung to the Order of Malta as to all the traditions of the Middle Ages.[1] He did not even

[1] The Porte, indignant, employed an efficient means to protect its subjects; namely, to compel European merchants to refund every thing pillaged by the Knights of Malta. Commerce clamored loudly, and the Christian powers finally obliged the Grand Master of Malta to renounce cruising against the Ottoman flag: but, the general agreement not having been effected, the Barbary corsairs continued their piracy, and there

Digitized by Google

obtain the liberty of the Turkish slaves confounded on the benches of our galleys with the Barbary pirates, contrary to the faith of treaties. It is impossible to read without deep disgust the account of the conferences of Dubois with the ambassador Mehemet Effendi: the honest Mahometan departed indignant at this minister, who only opened his lips "to raise the sluice of his reservoir of falsehood."[1]

Mehemet, however, did not confound France with its government, but carried back to the Levant a lively admiration of our enlightenment and arts. Printing was introduced at Constantinople, and our palaces and contemporaneous taste were copied on the Bosphorus as on the Neva: not that these were the best things that the East and the North could have borrowed from us.

The French cabinet, so inaccessible to the Ottomans in 1721, interfered, nevertheless, in their affairs in 1723; but it was by agreement with Russia and Austria. Peter the Great, resolved to indemnify himself on the Caspian Sea for the outlet that he had lost on the Black Sea, had invaded the north of Persia, distracted by the revolt of the Afghans. Despite the mutual hostility of the Turks and the Persians, Turkey could not behold a Mussulman empire dismembered by the *infidels* without alarm and anger; and the Sultan was about to declare war against Russia, when the Czar caused Austria, his ally, to intervene by threats of war, and France by diplomatic counsels. The French cabinet, which desired peace in Europe at any price (and it is just to admit that it is not in the direction of the interior of Asia that the aggrandizement of Russia is dangerous to the West), induced the Turks to share amicably with the Russians instead of opposing them. Shah Thamas, the son of Shah Hussein, dethroned by the Afghans, ceded to the Czar, Daghestan, Ghilan, Mazandaran, and Astrabad; that is, all the western and southern shore of the Caspian Sea. He ceded to the Sultan Achmet, Armenia, Georgia, Tabreez, Kasbin, etc. This dismemberment of Persia was not destined to be final.[2]

was less protection than ever against them; for the Order of Malta, having no more booty to hope for, only made a feint of cruising, and lost what little military spirit was left it. We know into what inanity and degradation it had fallen when our arms captured Malta from it without striking a blow.

[1] *Relation de l'Ambassade de Mehemet-Effendi.* MS. of the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal;* Extract in Flassan, t. IV. pp. 422–431; and Lémontei, t. I. p. 445.

[2] The Vizier Ibrahim, who had shown so much sympathy for France, was a victim to his attempted reforms, and perished in a revolt of the Janizaries, in 1730: his master, Achmet III., was deposed. Ibrahim had been unable, like Peter the Great, to form a

Digitized by Google

During the most eventful years of the Regency, the little time for attention to any thing else than the bank and the company, left to France by the tornado of the System, had been divided between foreign affairs and religious affairs, which continued to agitate a part of the nation by discussions without greatness, but not without obstinacy and violence.

At the accession of the Duke of Orleans, all who had been oppressed under the Great King had lifted up their heads. The Protestants had begun to assemble without concealment for prayer, informing the magistrates and the Regent himself of their meetings. They believed *the captivity of Babylon* ended. The Regent, perfectly indifferent to religious quarrels, would have asked nothing better than to grant full liberty to these poor, persecuted ones; but he knew how to do good only when it cost no effort, and dared not brave the torrent of intolerance. He commissioned the governors of the provinces to let the Protestants know that the edicts against them still subsisted, but that they would be treated with indulgence if they merited it by their conduct. On the whole, the governors acted as it seemed good to them, and continued the habits of sternness which they had contracted under Louis XIV. The Protestants of Languedoc returned at once to the obscurity in which they had shrouded themselves so long under the tyranny of Basville. The agitation was more prolonged in the neighboring provinces: the Dauphinese Protestants, oppressed by the garrisons, promised at last to renounce all exercise of worship. In Guienne, the Governor Berwick proposed to charge upon, that is, massacre, the assemblies which the *new converts* persisted in holding: the Regent opposed this, but ordered that the delinquents should be indicted before the parliament of Bordeaux, which had the barbarity to condemn them to the galleys. The Regent pardoned them, — at least the mere disciples; for the penalty of death against the preachers still remained in force (1717). The government somewhat restricted the violent investigation of Protestant marriages by the curés, prevented the horrible trials of the corpses of backsliders, suffered the odious ordinance dictated by Le Tellier in 1715 to fall into disuse, and refused to apply its principles to Protestant inheritances, and to treat as bastards the children of parents not married by the Church; but this was all: the abduction of the children of backsliders did not wholly cease, and all the principles of

foreign militia to aid him in putting down the fanatical militia, the enemy of all progress.

Digitized by Google

persecution remained standing. A few enlightened and patriotic men, joined by the Duke de Noailles, had, meanwhile, urgently entreated the Regent to restore to France the labor, intellect, and capital that had been ravished from it by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and to reopen to the expatriated Protestants a few points, at least, of the kingdom; for instance, to permit them to settle at Douai. There was yet time; the country was still living in the hearts of the exiles: a great number would have accepted with transport this favor, or rather this justice. The Regent was greatly shaken; but the Jansenists and the Gallicans of the *Council of Conscience* and the Council of the Regency, who had condemned certain excesses, certain profanations in the results of the revocation, and not the revocation itself, strongly opposed this proposition. The Regent dared not proceed (1717). Saint-Simon boasts in his Memoirs of having prevented the reparation of the evil which he himself so harshly reproaches Louis XIV. for having wrought. This reparative project was proposed anew in 1722: this time it was the Jesuits that caused its failure. The justice refused to the Protestants by the two factions that were disputing the Church was to be won for them by philosophy alone.[1]

These two factions had not suspended their quarrel for a single day. The death of Louis XIV. had at first suddenly inverted the rôles, and given the superiority to the *anti-constitutionnaires;* that is, to the Gallicans and Jansenists united against the common enemy, Ultramontanism.[2] The Jesuits were not persecuted, as their rivals had been, but humiliated and cast down, without being discouraged: they had in their favor the greater part of the bishops, attached to the Bull *Unigenitus*, a few by Molinistic conviction, many by self-love and the fear of retracting.[3] Their adversaries, meanwhile, had vigorously assumed the offensive. The Sorbonne protested, December 2, 1715, that it had not received the *Unigenitus* Constitution, and that it had only submitted to its transcription on its registers through obedience to the late King. It declared that the bishops had a right to judge, in matters of faith, "before, with, and after the Pope."[4] The parliament, on its

[1] Lémontei, t. II. pp. 142, *et seq.;* Coquerel, *Hist. des Églises du désert;* Saint-Simon, t. XIV. p. 153; Rulhière, p. 382.

[2] See *ante*, p. 9.

[3] An attempt, as singular as daring, of the Jesuits, attests how far they carried their views. They undertook to tamper with the soldiers in the congregations instituted in garrisoned towns. The Council of War was forced strictly to prohibit these affiliations (July, 1716). — Lémontei, t. I. p. 158.

[4] *Journal de l'Abbé Dorsanne*, t. II. p. 26.

Digitized by Google

side, did not retract concerning the registration of the Bull, but greatly elaborated the Gallican reservations that it had added thereto. Twenty-five bishops declared that they had accepted the Bull only *relatively, and not absolutely*. The Regent and the Council of the Regency did their best to effect a compromise as well at Paris as at Rome; and Philippe of Orleans presided, between his orgies, over many a theological conference: his intention, however, was good on this occasion, since he only sought peace. The Cardinal de Noailles and the most moderate of the *non-acceptant* bishops were disposed to subscribe to the Bull, provided that the Pope would restrict it in such a manner as to shelter the doctrines of St. Paul and St. Augustine, and all the traditions of the Church; but the Holy Father still demanded an acceptance pure and simple, and without official explanations on his part: he was fully conscious that to explain would be to retract. The conduct of the court of Rome aided the Jansenists in obtaining the éclat that they sought. The majority of the curés of Paris and of the diocese entreated their archbishop not to accept the Constitution; and the Faculty of Theology repaired in procession to the archbishop, amidst a great concourse of people, in order to confirm Noailles in his resistance (January 12, 1717). A few weeks after, four bishops appealed from the Bull *to the future council* (March 5, 1717). The Sorbonne assented to the appeal. This was a formal declaration of war against Rome. The Regent, alarmed at so daring an act, exiled the syndic of the Faculty of Theology, and banished the four prelates from Paris, for having acted without his permission. The signatures to the appeal none the less continued to come in from every side. The strife, in the greater part of the dioceses, was between the *constitionnaire* bishops and the majority of the curés, supported by the universities and the parliaments. The episcopal mandates declaimed, threatened, and pretended to excommunicate every one: the judicial decrees condemned the mandates to the flames as seditious and defamatory libels.

The government endeavored to put an end to all this scandal: a declaration of October 7, 1717, forbade the publication of any thing thenceforth concerning the Bull. The *constitutionnaire* bishops disobeyed. The court of Rome had recourse, on its side, to a weapon which it had formerly employed against Louis XIV.: it refused the bulls of investiture to the bishops appointed by the Regent. At the beginning of 1718, there were already twelve episcopal sees vacant. The Regent lost patience, and charged a purely

Digitized by Google

secular committee with devising means of dispensing with the Holy Father in the installation of the bishops elected. Several members of the Council of the Regency urged Philippe to appeal to the future council in the name of the King and the nation, and to pay no more attention thenceforth to this *worthless Italian document.* The rumor ran that the most anti-Roman of the doctors of the Sorbonne, particularly the renowned Ellies Dupin, had entered into correspondence with the heads of the Anglican Church. It was the turn of the Pope to tremble. With Philippe of Orleans, he had not the pious scruples of Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon to hope for! The Holy Father despatched the twelve bulls with such haste, that the courier died of fatigue on reaching Paris (March–May, 1718). Clement XI. speedily avenged himself for his affright by causing the appellants to the future council to be condemned by the Holy Office as heretics and schismatics, and ordering all believers to accept the Bull under pain of excommunication (August 28, 1718). The parliaments condemned and set aside the decree of the Inquisition and the apostolic letters of the Holy Father; the Cardinal de Noailles resigned the presidency of the Council of Conscience in order to regain his full liberty, and issued his appeal to the future council, which he had long hesitated to make public (September, 1718). The strife redoubled in violence. A new declaration, prescribing *silence* for a year, was issued by the council, June 3, 1719.

Hitherto, the Council of the Regency had shown itself independent and firm in the affairs of the Church;[1] but the influence of Dubois was not long in encroaching on the Church as on the State. Dubois had long dreamed of those high ecclesiastical dignities which shelter the fortunes of their holders from court revolutions, and caprices of favor. No sooner had he become minister, than he was seized with that *mania for the hat* which took possession of all ecclesiastics in credit, and which had caused them to be excluded from the ministry with so much reason by Louis XIV. The shameless frequenter of the brothels of Paris set about displaying the zeal of a father of the Church in theological matters, and

[1] The Regent had even recently, by a most liberal and praiseworthy measure, aided the University of Paris in sustaining a competition with the Jesuits in instruction. He had granted to the university sixty-six thousand francs annually, to enable the Faculty of Arts to teach gratuitously, as the other Faculties were already doing. The university instruction thus became wholly gratuitous (February 6, 1719). — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 173.

Digitized by Google

treating the Cardinal de Noailles as a heretic. He began by planting his batteries in the court of Rome; then called to his aid a strange auxiliary. Fearing that the enormity of the scandal might cause the Regent himself to waver, he induced the King of England to write to the latter, to ask him, as a personal favor, to procure the cardinal's hat for a person "so worthy of gratitude." Philippe stormed, then laughed, then wrote to the Pope (October 14–29, 1719). King George did not limit the proofs of his good will to his faithful servant to this. The death of the Cardinal de la Trémoille leaving vacant, meanwhile, the archbishopric of Cambrai, the King of England solicited it for Dubois. The Regent, by the request of the head of a *heretic* church, installed his atheistical professor, the former pander to his debauches, in that see of Cambrai still resplendent with the virtues of Fénelon. For Dubois to be consecrated, it was necessary that two bishops should testify to his doctrine and *morals:* they were found. One of the two was the illustrious Massillon. It is one of the saddest episodes of this epoch to see the successor of Bourdaloue, the last of the great Christian orators, officiating pontifically at the consecration of Dubois before the whole episcopate and court (June 9, 1720). The contrast between this act of weakness, extorted by the Regent, and the courageous truths which Massillon had so many times launched against the great from the pulpit, and which were really heartfelt, produced a deplorable impression on the public mind.

The Pope had granted the Bull of Cambrai without much difficulty, in order to gain time for the cardinalship; but the possession of this magnificent benefice did not abate Dubois' thirst for the hat. The new archbishop put himself in an attitude to win the object of his wishes by a brilliant service, — the triumph of the Constitution. The Regent was weary of the Jansenist rigidity, influenced by the thought that the support of Rome would be useful to his house in case of the vacancy of the throne, and, above all, ruled more and more by the habit of leaving every thing to Dubois. He would not, however, have authorized a return to the violence of the times of Le Tellier. Means of compromise had again been sought; and the greater part of the *acceptant* and *appellant* bishops had succeeded in reconciling themselves to, if not agreeing on, a frame of doctrine which explained, and in some sort extenuated, the Constitution. Without waiting for the Cardinal de Noailles and his friends to consent to the publication of this accommodation, the government issued a declaration, which, resting on "explanations

Digitized by Google

approved by almost all the bishops of the kingdom," prescribed the acceptance of the *Unigenitus* Constitution, and annulled the appeals to the council (August 4, 1720). This act, and the infractions made on the accommodation by the *constitutionnaires*, renewed the storm. The parliament, which was in exile at Pontoise, in consequence of its opposition to the System of Law, remonstrated instead of registering it: upon which the question of mutilating and dissolving this great body was seriously agitated about the Regent. The Cardinal de Noailles thought to save the parliament by issuing his acceptance of the accommodation, despite new grievances (November 17). The parliament decided to register the act (December 4). The Chancellor d'Aguesseau had greatly contributed to this through love of peace. The Jansenists cried out against apostasy, and renewed their appeals to the council: nevertheless, the greater part of the fire was, or appeared to be, extinct. The universities and principal religious corporations accepted the formulary of the bishops, one after another; and Dubois was able to boast to Rome of having done, if not all that Rome desired, at least all that was possible, and of having obtained a result which had been refused to Louis the Great himself.

Two promotions of cardinals, however, had taken place without including Dubois. A monument of his unheard-of efforts has been preserved to us, — his correspondence with his agent at Rome, the ex-Jesuit Lafiteau, the Bishop of Sisteron. There is nothing in any comedy that will compare with the ludicrousness of this long dialogue. Dubois begs, cajoles, and threatens: he crawls like a serpent, roars like a lion, flatters and bites like a cat. If this were only shameless, it would be vulgar; but he joins to inveterate falsehood new hypocrisy, and, in order not to forget his part, remains a hypocrite even before his confidant, like a comedian before his mirror. He plays "the honest man, indignant that any one should haggle with him;" the worthy prelate, "too happy if he can only sacrifice himself for the Church;" and this in the same letters in which he announces the sending of specie designed to purchase the nephews and familiars of the Pope, and the Holy Father himself, who was very short of money.[1] Lafiteau had apprised him

[1] He also employed other more delicate means. "I repeat nothing," wrote he, "of what it will be an honor and a pleasure to me to do with respect to His Holiness, — cares, offices, gratuities, engravings, books, jewels, presents, every kind of attention: something new and unexpected will be seen daily, to give pleasure and surprise, when I have the right to act thus through gratitude. This is my nature. I cannot make up my mind to do the least thing that might be suspected of interest; but I spare nothing

Digitized by Google

that the downfall of the System had been a heavy blow to his interests. "The Pope," he wrote, "hearing it said that there is no more silver in France, despairs of receiving any assistance from it" (December 17, 1720). Dubois then determined to prove to him that there was still *silver in France*, at least in his coffers: it is true that this silver was more English than French. He employed many other resources: he put every court in motion, and made his hat the great business of Europe for eighteen months. He succeeded in causing fire and water to act at once in his favor, — King George and the Pretender, the Emperor and the King of Spain! It was the masterpiece of *diplomatic* profligacy. He had purchased the destitution of the Pretender with the guineas of King George, and gained over Philip V. by his confessor.

The comedy was twofold; for Clement XI. was by no means second to Dubois in astuteness: the Holy Father was a match at the foils for the Archbishop of Cambrai. At length Dubois, forcing Clement to the wall, compelled him, at least, to part with a written promise for the first promotion. The promise come, it was impossible to make use of it without quarrelling with England! Very equivocal, withal, it was signed, not by the request of the Regent, but *on the entreaty of the Pretender* (January 14, 1721). The aged pontiff thus gave himself time to die, without making Dubois a cardinal (March 19).

Dubois set to work anew: he undertook to give the tiara to the one who would promise him the hat, and, the Emperor and the King of Spain leaving the field free to him, succeeded. The Cardinal Conti, an old man almost in his dotage, signed the engagement, and was elected (May 8). The new promise, drawn up by two Italian cardinals, was still very ambiguous; and Conti, become Pope Innocent XIII., did not hasten to keep his word. It was necessary to pass through new tribulations, and to furnish fresh bribes at the moment of the greatest distress that followed the downfall of Law, and when there was not wherewith to pay the army. Rome yielded at last, and Dubois was made cardinal, July 16, 1721. It had cost France eight millions, and the pecuniary price was not the most onerous one.[1]

Every thing succeeded with Dubois. The concessions which he

when I can act and give through pure inclination." — *Mém. secrets du cardinal Dubois*, t. I. p. 341; letter of June 22, 1720.

[1] Concerning this whole affair, see *Mém. secrets de Dubois*, t. I. pp. 266–426; t. II. pp. 1–186; Lémontei, t. II. ch. xiii; *Journal de Dorsanne*, t. I. II.

Digitized by Google

had obtained from the Regent for Rome had a double result: they procured him the hat, and furnished him an opportunity to repair, in appearance,[1] the evil that he had done in causing strife between France and Spain. The French Jesuit Daubenton, the confessor of Philip V., was absolutely devoted to his company, and very well disposed towards France, on condition that the Jesuits ruled there. As soon as he saw Molinism revived, and Jansenism in disgrace on the north of the Pyrenees, he thought only of effacing the prejudices that he himself had cherished in his royal penitent. A secret treaty of March 27, 1721, was a first pledge of reconciliation between France and Spain. France promised her diplomatic coöperation to the Spanish interests in a congress which was about to assemble at Cambrai to decide definitively on the relations between the Emperor, Spain, and Italy. This independent proceeding was noised at London, and great astonishment was expressed that the cabinet of the Palais-Royal should have dared to take a step without the consent of England. Dubois, terrified, hastened to drop the treaty of March 27, and to offer his good offices to the English cabinet for the substitution in its place of another agreement, a defensive alliance between France, England, and Spain, accompanied with a treaty of commerce, by which Philip V. restored to the English all the commercial advantages that Alberoni had granted them when seeking to gain their friendship (June 13, 1721). Dubois caused permission to be granted by Spain to the English, in addition to the treaty, to send a ship every year to trade in the West Indies. This ship was equal to ten, owing to the fraud by which its freight was unceasingly renewed.

England appeased at the expense of French commerce, Dubois pursued his plans: he had owed his fortune to the difference that had arisen between the Bourbons of France and Spain; he resolved to consolidate it by reuniting them for the interest of the House of Orleans. He therefore insinuated to Philip V. the idea of marrying his daughter and his two sons, the Prince of Asturias and Don Carlos, the eventual heir to Parma and Tuscany, to King Louis XV. and two of the daughters of the Regent, Mesdemoiselles de Montpensier and de Beaujolais. Philip V. consented. He was delighted to have the King of France for a son-in-law. As to the Regent's daughters, he accepted them precisely on account of his incurable suspicions against their father: they

[1] He repaired neither the destruction of the forces of Spain, nor the giving of Sicily to the Austrians!

Digitized by Google

were two hostages, which this hypochondriacal prince designed to secure for the *Infanta Queen*. This triple marriage had still another advantage for the House of Orleans, besides that of advantageously settling two of its princesses: the Infanta, born in 1718, would not be nubile for a very long time, and the epoch when Louis XV. could give birth to a dauphin was postponed ten or twelve years.

The exchange of the daughters of Philip V. and Philippe of Orleans was effected on the Bidassoa, January 9, 1722. The new Princess of Asturias had an auto-da-fé for her wedding entertainment.[1] Meanwhile, the Company of Jesus, according to Dubois' promise, resumed possession of the conscience of the King of France. The venerable Abbé Fleuri was succeeded as confessor to King Louis XV. by the Jesuit Linières. From this it was not long before the posthumous edition of Fleuri's *Discourse on the Gallican Liberties* was suppressed, by order of the council; while a rigorous surveillance was established over the printing-presses and the booksellers' shops, and the displaying for sale and hawking about of books and engravings were subjected to an implacable persecution.[2] The times of Father Le Tellier had returned in maxims, if not in acts of personal violence.

The success of Dubois at Rome and Madrid insured his sway over France. Secretary of State, archbishop, and cardinal, he had not yet scaled all the rounds of the ladder of his fortune. Before assuming the appearance, as he had the reality, of the ruling power, he rid himself of the Council of the Regency, the last obstacle to his autocracy. He raised a quarrel of etiquette by causing the Cardinal de Rohan to be called to the council. The Regent having granted the precedence to this cardinal, according to usage,

[1] We are mistaken if we imagine that the Spanish Inquisition had been in the least degree mitigated since the sixteenth century. Its ferocity had not diminished with the disappearance of peril. Under Philip V. it caused two thousand three hundred and forty-six victims, a great number of whom were women, to perish at the stake, and threw twelve thousand into dungeons. These horrible spectacles, which had become a necessity to the Spanish clergy, like bull-fights to the people, were very repugnant to the Frenchmen of the suite of Philip V., and shocked Philip himself at the time of his accession; but he had become accustomed to them. The statistics given by Lémontei, t. I. p. 431, from the papers of the French ambassador Maulevrier, prove that Llorente has exaggerated nothing in his *History of the Inquisition*.

[2] See the curious ordinances of October 20, 1721, February 28, 1723, June 22, September 9, *ibid.* *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. pp. 202–216, etc. The preamble of the ordinance of October 20, 1721, states that the shopkeepers and hawkers of Paris openly resisted the police agents, and that they were supported by the 'longshore-men and "others of the populace."

Digitized by Google

over the chancellor, dukes, and marshals, all the leading members of the council withdrew. Dubois entered this mutilated council, which was no longer any thing but a passive instrument in his hands, in the train of Rohan (February, 1722). Shortly after, Dubois induced the Regent to reinstall himself with the King at Versailles (June 15, 1722). This was symbolical in the mind of the prelate. Dubois designed to reëstablish the government of Louis XIV. within, after having destroyed the policy of the Great King without; that is to say, to inflict on France its despotism without its glory. What he thought to copy, he could, at the most, but parody. It is impossible to roll back the course of ages. In carrying back the young King to Versailles, he did not carry thither anew the moral dominion of the kingdom, which remained at Paris. The court was never more to become France, and Paris had succeeded to the inheritance of Versailles.[1]

Dubois, meanwhile, labored to possess himself of the future as of the present, without being willing to comprehend that the shameful maladies which were preying upon him interdicted this future to him. His triumph over the Council of the Regency guaranteed him only one year's reign. February 16, 1723, was the epoch of the royal majority; and then a child of thirteen might, with a word, overthrow every thing. It was necessary, therefore, to assure himself of this child. The task was not without difficulty. Never were monarchical fictions applied to an object less fitted to disguise their repugnance to reason. Louis XV. had nothing royal but his face, which was regularly beautiful, but of a cold and wholly external beauty, illumined or softened by no gleam of soul. Nothing in him resembled his father or his great-grandfather: in the vulgarity of his tastes, he resembled rather his grandfather the Dauphin, the son of Louis XIV.; but he did not even give promise of the kind of commonplace good nature possessed by the Dauphin.[2] A child, not without intelligence, but without attractiveness and tenderness, without gayety and

[1] After the enormous agglomeration caused by the System was dissipated, five hundred thousand inhabitants were left to Paris, one hundred and fifty thousand of whom were domestics. There were twenty-four thousand houses, twenty thousand carriages, and one hundred and twenty thousand horses. These statistics are those given by Germain Brice in 1725.

[2] The Advocate Barbier cites in his *Journal* a horrible anecdote of the young King: "He had a white fawn that he had brought up and fed, and that was strongly attached to him. He had her carried to La Muette, saying that he wished to kill her; and fired upon and wounded her. The fawn ran to the King, and caressed him; but he ordered her to be taken away again, fired a second time, and killed her."

Digitized by Google

openness of heart, he revealed, under some show of nervous sensibility, a nature at the bottom at once unfeeling, timid, and harsh. His affections were only habits. The personages to be feared by the Regent and Dubois, at the moment of the royal majority, were, therefore, those brought by their functions continually about the youthful Louis, the governor and the preceptor, Villeroi and Fleuri,[1] two old men of wholly opposite characters. Villeroi, boasting, passionate, without judgment or prudence, by turns injudiciously restrained the royal child, and ostentatiously fawned upon him. As the end of the Regency approached, he became harsh and almost impertinent to the Regent, and rude to Dubois. Fleuri, on the contrary, gentle, obsequious, modest towards the powers of the day, silently attached the King to him by his weak indulgence; accustomed him to think only through his old master; strove to stifle in him all energy for good as for evil; put away from him every thing that could exalt his soul and excite his reason or his indolent imagination; reared him, in short, as the brothers of kings were formerly reared systematically. His whole education was, as it were, mechanical; and morality and religion, or rather devotion, were inculcated on him only "under the form of prejudices."[2] Fleuri, too well seconded by nature, prepared an instrument manageable by himself alone.

It was already too late to set aside Fleuri; but it was possible to share with him. Villeroi was intractable: he was overthrown. August 10, 1722, in consequence of an altercation to which the Regent had given rise, Villeroi was arrested, and exiled to Lyons. Fleuri, who had been the protégé of Villeroi, appeared at first to wish to share the disgrace of his patron, and disappeared from Versailles without letting any one know the place of his retreat. The King was greatly chagrined, and the Regent and Dubois were very uneasy; but Fleuri was hidden in such a way as to be found without difficulty. The King was induced to write him a line: he thought decorum preserved, and returned. A few days after, Dubois attained his end. Aided by the English chargé d'affaires,

[1] Lémontei, t. II. chap. xiv. Do not confound the preceptor, Fleuri, Ex-Bishop of Fréjus, with the confessor, Abbé Fleuri, the historian, who had died in the interval. According to the Marquis d'Argenson (*Mém.* t. I. p. 192), the King, nevertheless, had a liking for the Regent, who had conceived a sincere affection for him. M. d'Argenson forms illusions concerning Louis XV., to which he clings as long as possible, and which are seen dispelled by degrees in his interesting Memoirs. — See the strongly colored portrait in vol. II. p. 330.

[2] Lémontei, t. II. p. 56. He confessed in writing to the Jesuit Linières, and the confessor was forbidden to ask him any question.

Digitized by Google

Schaub, he succeeded in demonstrating to the Regent the necessity of the existence of a prime minister that would be his creature at the moment of the royal majority, in order to avoid any sudden shock, and to secure to him the continuance of his power. The self-love of the Regent suffered somewhat from this kind of premature abdication; but Philippe, dulled by his nocturnal excesses, and plunged during the whole morning in a torpor which rendered him incapable of thought and labor, was no longer in a condition to refuse any thing to Dubois. He only retained the presidency of the councils, and the signature of the reports of the finances, and orders on the treasury. Dubois, declared prime minister, sullied the seat of Richelieu after that of Fénelon; as if all the great traditions of France must be blighted, one after another, by this man (August 22, 1722).

Without waiting for his majority, the Regent and Dubois caused Louis XV. to be crowned October 25: this coronation was rendered remarkable by two circumstances, — the construction of the first paved highway from Paris to Rheims, and the hesitation of the rulers concerning the maintenance of the ceremony of *touching for the king's evil*, in the presence of the growing scepticism. Dubois was anxious to parody the past to the end, and the ceremony of *the royal touch* took place.[1] On returning from Rheims, the Regent, at the instigation of Dubois, began with some ostentation to give the King lessons in politics. The young Louis was made to attend three courses of lectures on foreign policy, war, and finance, to which he showed himself very inattentive, retaining little except the prejudices inspired in him against every thing that could oppose obstacles to absolute authority. The day of his majority arrived without producing any effective change (February 16, 1723). Philippe laid down the title of Regent; Dubois was confirmed in the prime ministry, and Philippe in the prerogatives which he had retained on appointing Dubois prime minister: only the preceptor, Fleuri, entered the Council of State, composed of the King, the Duke of Orleans, his son, the Duke de Chartres, the Duke de Bourbon, and the Cardinal Dubois. Important affairs continued, however, to be decided between the King, the Duke of Orleans, and the prime minister; that is to say, to be decided by Dubois.

Espionage on a large scale, harsh fiscal measures, material order rudely maintained, and hypocrisy in religious affairs, — such

[1] And *one* of the patients was even cured, according to the testimony of D'Argenson, *Mém.* t. I. p. 201.

Digitized by Google

were the principal characteristics of the administration under this strange successor of Richelieu and Mazarin. Dubois seemed to have drained scandal to the dregs: it was not so; an unheard-of spectacle worthily crowned that life which had been nothing but a prolonged profanation of all that men hold sacred, — the assembly of the clergy of France, June 4, 1723, was beheld solemnly installing Cardinal Dubois into its presidential chair. What a fall from the assemblies of 1682 and 1700! The church, like the monarchy, could descend no lower!

Dubois, however, proposed to pay for his ecclesiastical honors by eminent services; and the acceptance of the Bull was to him only the starting-point. The only thing that he ever practised conscientiously was the vocation of ultramontane cardinal: he had become more Roman than Rome; and it may be even suspected, that, in this insatiable soul, the mania for the hat was beginning to be succeeded by the *papal rabies*. "I am now undertaking," he wrote to Rome, "great things for the authority of the Holy See and the episcopal jurisdiction, which will appear at the end of the assembly, and which necessitate much labor, and all the authority of my place. I shall display this without any fear of the parliaments, which will be the principal object of it"[1] (June 25). That is to say, he proposed to take away from the civil magistrates, in ecclesiastical affairs, an intervention indispensable wherever a *religion of State* exists which recognizes a foreign head. The State saw itself, therefore, on the point of being immolated by an atheistic minister to a corrupt church, after having surmounted the same peril in the days of the greatness and sanctity of this same church.

Dubois had not time to realize his projects. Although, for some years past, the fires of ambition had extinguished those of libertinism in him, the consequences of his past irregularities were undermining him, and the excesses of labor finished what the excesses of vice had begun. It is said, that, by a new kind of plot, the other ministers who were humiliated by his yoke hastened his end, and overwhelmed him with his own pride, by referring all business to him under pretence of deference. A ludicrous incident precipitated the catastrophe. Dubois, playing Richelieu, took a fancy to review the King's household. During this review, in which his grotesque mien greatly amused the musketeers and light cavalry, the motion of his horse caused the bursting

[1] *Mémoires secrets de Dubois*, t. II. p. 365.

Digitized by Google

of an abscess in his bladder. He was carried dying to Versailles. The Duke of Orleans forced him to submit to a painful operation, which was his last chance of safety; but it was impossible to arrest the gangrene. His attendants wished to bring the curé with the holy oil. Dubois exclaimed, cursing and swearing, according to his custom, that far other ceremonies were needed to administer the viaticum to a cardinal; and ordered his fellow-dignitary, the Cardinal de Bissi, to be sent for. Before Bissi arrived, Dubois expired without the viaticum (August 10, 1723). The government had the modesty, at least, not to give him a funeral oration; there was no profit in flattering the dead: but the financiers did so in their way; the stocks of the Indian Company fell. Thus was shadowed forth from the beginning the morality of the *Bourse!* It must be confessed, however, that the *Bourse* was not wholly in the wrong; for there was soon seen what seemed impossible, — something worse even than Dubois! His vices reappeared with less talent and blacker depravity![1]

The Duke of Orleans took up, with a heavy hand, the title of prime minister. It is pretended that he had only given it to Dubois in the certainty of his speedy death, announced by the physicians, and with the idea of succeeding him. Fleuri opposed no obstacle to this. Philippe seemed for a moment to rouse himself. Important projects were agitated around him. The Indian Company urged the reëstablishment of the bank, and Law's hope revived in the recesses of his exile. Philippe had caused him to be secretly consulted concerning the condition of the finances, which Dubois had only kept from ruin by a series of edicts prescribing extraordinary taxes. All this passed like a flash of lightning. Philippe was no longer capable of wishing or acting connectedly: death was preying at his heart in turn. He had worn out his brilliant intellect and robust frame in a perpetual orgie. A severe regimen might have saved him: he had not sufficient courage, or rather sufficient love of life, to renounce what had become habit rather than pleasure to his cloyed senses. Disgusted with every thing, interested in nothing longer in this world, and believing in no other, when his physician signified to him that his manner of living was evidently leading him either to dropsy of the chest

[1] The Memoirs of the Marquis d'Argenson, the elder son of the keeper of the seals of the Regency, fully affirm the accredited traditions relative to the pernicious influence of Dubois over the youth of Philippe, as well as those relative to the famous English boarding-school. D'Argenson even accuses Dubois of having corrupted the daughter (the Duchess of Berry) as well as the father. — *Mém.* t. I. pp. 29–31.

Digitized by Google

or apoplexy, he chose the kind of death least painful, like the proscribed Epicureans under the Cæsars, and spared nothing to obtain a sudden end.

Every one saw the fatal moment coming, and the inheritance had already found a successor. It would have been easy for the aged Fleuri to have reserved it to himself; but the tranquil and temperate ambition of the preceptor of Louis XV. in no wise resembled the frenzied ambition of the preceptor of Philippe. Placidly egotistical, devoid of cupidity and vanity, Fleuri cared neither for the display nor the pecuniary advantages of authority, and disliked the details of administration, too heavy for the indolence of a superficial old man who had passed his life in leisure and in the gossip of boudoirs. What he desired was a great and dominant influence, which would impose on him neither the responsibility nor the trouble of power. He resolved, therefore, not to take the title of prime minister, but to cause it to be given to the eldest of the princes of the blood, the Duke de Bourbon, who had constantly mixed in public affairs during the Regency with great profit and little esteem. His very incapacity was a virtue for the part destined to him by Fleuri.

December 2, 1723, the apoplexy expected by all, and especially by the victim, struck Philippe in the arms of one of his mistresses. This prince, who had so deplorably squandered so many happy gifts of Nature, was but forty-nine. At the news, the Duke de Bourbon hastened to the King, whom he found with Fleuri. The preceptor told the young monarch, that, "in the great loss which he had suffered in the Duke of Orleans, His Majesty could not do better than to entreat M. le Duc to be pleased to accept the place of prime minister." The King consented by a sign of the head. The Duke took the oath, the patent was delivered to him, and the new government began.[1]

[1] Saint-Simon, t. XX. p. 460. Here end the twenty volumes of the Memoirs of Saint-Simon. It has been sought to make of Saint-Simon a kind of great man. He is very far from this. He is neither a great politician, nor a great thinker, nor a just mind, although he may have at times very just and sagacious views on particular subjects; but he is a great painter. Through an enormous mass of great events ingeniously and vividly portrayed, petty incidents of which he makes mountains, grave and interminable puerilities, truths in facts (in facts which he has seen with his own eyes at least), and romances in causes, — through this chaos sparkle unceasingly flashes of genius, but of a genius wholly peculiar. It is this genius that seizes physiognomies, gestures, the most trifling movements of the soul and body, individual portraits and whole pictures, and fixes them in strokes that are never forgotten. A marvellous observer of the details and form of all things, an indefatigable spy upon two generations, the last of the seventeenth and first of the eighteenth centuries, this *curioso par*

Digitized by Google

The period of the Regency had lasted little more than eight years, including the few months of the prorogation of the power of Dubois and Philippe. It holds a much more important place in our annals than would seem to comport with this trifling space of time. It did not cause, as has been pretended, the destruction of the monarchy and of ancient French society; the source of this destruction was in the constitution itself of this monarchy and this society: but it marked, so to say, the direction of this decline, and precipitated it. Abroad, the policy of Richelieu and Louis XIV. overthrown for the selfish interests of a younger branch, and France linked to the will of England and the interests of Austria; at home, an immense economic revolution rendered abortive, and terminated by bankruptcy; morals subverted like fortunes; unbounded license displaying itself in broad daylight with an affrontery and madness that called to mind the vertigo of the last Valois; scepticism — that which arises, not from the meditation of the mind, but from the depravity of the heart — invading the higher classes, and profaning the rites of the religion in which it no longer believed, — such had been the principal features of this epoch, the memory of which amused the brilliant and frivolous society of the ancient régime until the day when it was aroused by the thunders of the Revolution. Modern France would judge the Regency with greater severity.

excellence has left a work without model or analogy; or rather it is not a work, but his whole life that he abandons to us with that of all his contemporaries. He is himself the most original and often the most ludicrous character of his immense comedy.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

MINISTRIES OF THE DUKE DE BOURBON AND THE CARDINAL DE FLEURI.

SECTION 1. — MONSIEUR LE DUC. — Government of Madame de Prie and Pâris Duvernei. New Monetary and Economic Subversions. Archbishop Tressan. New Persecutions against the Protestants. Income Tax of One-fiftieth. New Rupture with Spain. Marriage of the King to Maria Leczinska. Popular Sufferings and Agitations. Spain and Austria become reconciled. Austrian *Pragmatic Sanction*. Contest between *Monsieur le Duc* and Fleuri, the Preceptor to the King. Overthrow of *Monsieur le Duc*. SECTION 2. — THE CARDINAL DE FLEURI. — System of Supineness. Economy Within; Peace Without; No Reforms; No Innovations; the French Marine sacrificed to England. Fleuri and the Walpoles. Reconciliation with Spain. The Cardinal de Tencin. Persecution of the Jansenists. Dissensions of the Parliament and the Ministry. Miracles of the Deacon Pâris. SECTION 3. — THE MINISTRY OF FLEURI CONTINUED: WAR OF THE POLISH ELECTION. — Death of Augustus II., King of Poland. France supports, for the Throne of Poland, Stanislaus Leczinski, the Father-in-law of Louis XV. Russia and Austria support Augustus III. Fleuri, through Fear of the English, does not earnestly sustain Stanislaus. Siege of Dantzic. Heroic Death of Plélo. Stanislaus, elected by the Poles, is overthrown by the Russians. France avenges herself on Austria. France, Spain, and Sardinia attack Austria in Italy. Battles of Parma and Guastalla. The Austrians are expelled from the Two Sicilies and from nearly all Lombardy. Scheme of CHAUVELIN, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, for the Independence of Italy. Fleuri does not support it to the End, and dismisses Chauvelin through Jealousy. Peace of Vienna. Milanais restored to Austria, and Parma ceded to her on Condition of her Renunciation of the Two Sicilies in Favor of the second Son of Philip V. Lorraine given to Stanislaus, to revert to the Crown of France; and Tuscany given in Exchange to the Duke of Lorraine, the Son-in-law of the Emperor. Guarantee of the Austrian *Pragmatic* Sanction. Great Spontaneous Progress of Commerce, the Merchant Shipping, and the French Colonies in the East and West Indies. Contrast between the Wretchedness of the Country Districts and the Ostentation of the Towns and Seaports.

1723–1739.

SECTION I. — MONSIEUR LE DUC.

1723–1726.

THERE was nothing to hope from the new government. The Duke de Bourbon had been implicated in the worst that had been done under Philippe of Orleans: the continuance of the Regency, without its wit, was what was to be expected. Fleuri had been

Digitized by Google

mistaken in counting on a docile cipher. *Monsieur le Duc* was docile, indeed, but to others than the aged preceptor of the King. Behind his nothingness were actively ambitious schemers. A charming and perverse young woman, who concealed every vice under the graces of a feigned ingenuousness, the Marchioness de Prie, the daughter of a revenue-farmer married to a diplomatist, disposed of *Monsieur le Duc* as of a slave, and made him the instrument of her vanity, cupidity, and hatred. This new Regency, fallen under the sway of the distaff, had its *roués*, at the head of whom shone that young Duke de Richelieu, who filled the whole eighteenth century with his scandalous rènown, and who was for sixty years the type of elegant corruption and haughty frivolity. It had also its Dubois and Law at once combined in Pâris Duvernei, a statesman-financier, an active, fertile, and daring spirit, but harsh, passionate, and despotic, a subaltern tyrant under a tyrant in petticoats, who, without more official title than Madame de Prie herself, directed for her and through her all the ministries, none of which had specially devolved upon him.

Fleuri found, therefore, from the first moment, in the prince whom he had invested with power, a smothered hostility instead of gratitude. The distribution of posts and favors depended, whatever *Monsieur le Duc* and his directors might do, on the man that alone knew how to loosen the tongue of the King: but the whole administration was formed, as far as possible, without Fleuri; and a beginning was made by secretly deterring the Pope from granting him the red hat that was ostensibly solicited for him.

This administration received from its true leader, Pâris Duvernei, a singularly despotic character, at once reasoning and abrupt. Duvernei, who set himself up for a practical and positive man, in opposition to the systematic *dreams* of Law, renewed in an inverse direction the violent and rash measures by which Law had subverted economic interests. There had continued, since the System, despite the abolition of paper-money, a rise in value of provisions, wages, and coin, which was objectionable only because it was not sufficiently regular and general. Duvernei undertook to lower by force all nominal values: in less than two years (from February 4, 1724, to December 14, 1725), he depreciated the coin nearly one-half; the louis d'or was lowered from twenty-seven livres to fourteen; the silver mark, from seventy-four livres four sous to thirty-eight livres seventeen sous. At the same time, he laid a tariff on workmanship and commodities, and strove to subject all

Digitized by Google

merchandise to tariffs calculated according to the depreciation imposed on the coin. Had the people been able to comprehend an operation so complicated, and had it been possible to execute it with rigorous precision, it would have had no other objection than that of perfect uselessness; but this was not the case. The people saw, with a kind of despair, the return of the disorder of 1720. The working-men rose in defence of their wages; they were cut down in the streets of Paris: the merchants refused to lower their prices; they were thrown into the Bastille, or their shops were closed. The agitation extended to the provinces: the resistance, repressed at one point, broke out at a score of others; and the working-classes appeared to give the government no credit for another arbitrary measure by which Duvernei thought to aid labor, — the reduction of the legal rate of interest to three and one-third per cent; a reduction wholly out of proportion to the economic situation of the country (June 28, 1724).[1]

The legislation of this period bears almost everywhere the same imprint of lofty pretensions in design, and injudicious and cruel violence in execution. For instance, the declaration of July 17, 1724, concerning mendicants and vagrants, made a display of great principles of social justice and public good, and decreed an extensive system for the extinction of mendicity: to each hospital was to be annexed a voluntary asylum for the indigent, a prison for vagrants and professional beggars, and workshops for both. This was certainly a great design, but one prodigiously difficult, and demanding much time and large resources. The government proceeded with it with inhuman precipitation: it did not wait until the new buildings were ready to receive the mendicants, but crowded these unfortunates, almost without food and clothing, within the narrow walls of the hospitals. "Let them sleep on straw, and feed them on bread and water; they will take up the less room!" wrote the comptroller-general Dodun, the pitiless executioner of the wishes of Duvernei, to the intendants. The government undertook to make up by terror for the resources which it did not possess; it succeeded only in arousing the general indignation: the magistrates, the managers of the hospitals, the soldiers, the marshalsea itself, opposed a passive resistance to the ministerial injunctions; all agreed in favoring the escape of the unfortunate prisoners. The government then conceived the idea of imprinting an indelible mark on mendicants, either by chemical ingredients or by fire!

[1] Lémontei, t. II. p 132.

Digitized by Google

These extravagant barbarities were foiled by the holy league of public charity.

Another law was more lasting, and was not destined to disappear until the Revolution, — that which punished robbery by servants with death in all cases (March 4, 1724), the only remembrance left in history by the obscure keeper of the seals, D'Armenonville, who was at that time administering justice in the place of the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, twice disgraced under the Regent, and left in disgrace under the Duke de Bourbon. Masters, in general, abhorred this savage law, and very rarely provoked its application: so that guilty domestics remained much oftener unpunished in France than elsewhere.

The customs in France often corrected the cruelty of the laws. This was not the case in the colonies where slavery reigned. Domestic despotism still aggravated there the rigor of the *Black Code*, which was extended, meanwhile, to Louisiana (March, 1724). The freedmen and the mulattoes, who were beginning to multiply, were, in their turn, the object of jealous and tyrannical provisions: an edict of February 8, 1726, declared persons of color incapable of receiving any gift or legacy from whites; and condemned freedmen who received fugitive slaves, and who were unable to pay a heavy fine for this offence, to be again made slaves.[1]

Among the numerous legislative measures of this restless and vacillating administration, a few merit approbation: for instance, the odious custom of farming out the prisons as public property was abolished, — a custom which put at the discretion of covetous farmers the subsistence and maintenance of the prisoners (June 11, 1724). A work of public utility, the Canal of Saint Quentin, or from the Somme to the Oise, was undertaken (1724); but the government took no other part in it than to authorize a company to attempt the enterprise, which it could not sustain, and which was finished by another company formed in 1732.[2] A royal declaration signified that permission would no longer be granted to cut down the forest growth (March 25, 1725). A decree of the council, extending, to all interested in commerce, the measure which had regulated, under Dubois, the traffic in the stocks of

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 298. A law of the close of the reign of Louis XIV. (December 30, 1712) had, on the contrary, endeavored to protect the slaves by decreeing pecuniary penalties against colonists who did not feed them, or who put them to torture.

[2] Soldiers were employed in these works. — See *Journal de Louis XV.*, 1728.

Digitized by Google

the Indian Company, prescribed the establishment of an exchange in the Rue Vivienne for the negotiation of letters of exchange, notes to the bearer and to order, and other commercial paper, and merchandise and stocks (September 24, 1724). The negotiation of *rentes* on the State, the chief object of the present Bourse, was not yet publicly authorized.[1] The revocation of municipal offices, the restoration of the election to the towns, and the abolition of some useless posts, were measures good in themselves, but unjust to the holders of these offices, who were reimbursed only in titles of *rentes* at two per cent.

Among the acts of this time, there is one especially that devotes the government of the Duke de Bourbon to the contempt and indignation of posterity,—the declaration of May 14, 1724, concerning the Protestants. Under the Regency, the lot of the Protestants had received some mitigation in point of fact; but none of the persecuting laws had been abrogated. Neither *Monsieur le Duc*, nor Madame de Prie, nor Pâris Duvernei, would have thought, of themselves, of these matters, and the aged Fleuri was not disposed to reawaken the embarrassments; but there was at that time, in the avenues of power, one of those intriguers, devoid of faith, morals, and compassion, who were encroaching more and more upon the dignities of a corrupt church. This was Lavergne de Tressan, the ex-almoner of the Regent, and familiar guest of the *roués:* it is affirmed that he had obtained from the prodigal Philippe seventy-five benefices, besides the bishopric of Nantes. He had seen Dubois and others win the cardinalship at the expense of the Jansenists. The issue of Protestant ancestors, he resolved to take the fellow-believers of his sires as a stepping-stone to attain the red hat. Become the Secretary of the Council of Conscience after the withdrawal of the Jansenists, then the Archbishop of Rouen, he proposed to Dubois to remodel the different laws of Louis XIV.

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 278. It should be recognized that every precaution was taken to prevent stock-jobbing as far as possible. It was forbidden to announce the price of any stock aloud, or to make any signal or manœuvre to raise or lower the price, under penalty of exclusion from the Exchange, and a fine of six thousand livres. Private individuals who wished to buy or sell commercial paper or other bills were to remit the money or bills to the brokers before the opening of the Exchange, under penalty against the brokers of removal, and a fine of three thousand livres. All negotiations were to be made at the Exchange, to the exclusion of all other places. It was forbidden to call any meeting elsewhere, or to keep any office for the transaction of negotiations, etc., under penalty of a fine of six thousand livres.

It must be admitted that we are far distant from the law of 1724. This law, moreover, was not long observed, and stock-jobbing soon had full scope.

Digitized by Google

against heretics. Dubois would not listen to him. A second attempt with the Duke of Orleans, after Dubois' death, was not more successful. Tressan was not discouraged, and succeeded better with the new power. This government of revenue-farmers and fallen women thought to perform an act of lofty policy by returning to "the footsteps of Louis the Great," and received without examination, and without preliminary report, the plan of an ordinance presented by the Archbishop of Rouen. The declaration of 1724 renewed the most pitiless provisions of Louis XIV., with the exception of that which prescribed the drawing on hurdles of the corpses of backsliders, and which it was not dared to maintain in the presence of the public disgust and abhorrence. But the abolition of this was much more than compensated for by new cruelties, less brutal and more refined: hypocrisy is more skilled in evil than fanaticism. An article, planned with infernal art, included, in the terrible penalties decreed against Protestant assemblies, all exercise of worship, even within the family. To the penalty of death decreed against preachers was added the galleys for life for men, and perpetual imprisonment for women, against all who did not inform against them. It was enjoined on curés, or vicars, to visit the sick suspected of heresy, and to exhort them in private and without witnesses. An arbitrary fine was decreed against relatives, friends, or servants who should prevent the curé from having access to the sick, and the galleys for life against concealed Protestants who should exhort or assist the sick secretly. The law condemning every Protestant, who should be cured after having refused the sacraments, to the galleys for life, and to confiscation of property as a backslider, was confirmed;[1] if the sick man died, his memory was to be prosecuted, and his property confiscated. Formerly it had been necessary that the refusal of the sacraments should be attested to by a magistrate: now the testimony of the curé was sufficient. The parish priest was constituted an official informer! Parents were forbidden to consent to the marriage of their children in foreign countries, without express permission from the King, under penalty of the galleys for life for men, and perpetual banishment for women, with confiscation of property: at the same time, the *new Catholics* (and under this title were comprehended all Protestants, according to the fiction of the law of 1715, which denied that there were any Protestants remaining in France) were ordered to observe in their marriages the formalities prescribed by

[1] In the provinces where confiscation was not permitted, it was compensated for by a fine of half the property.

Digitized by Google

the *holy canons* and the ordinances. All civil status was thus annihilated for Protestants: there were thenceforth in France, before the law, only Catholics, and backsliders liable to the galleys.[1]

The law was monstrous; the execution was worse. The aged tyrant of Languedoc, Basville, aroused by Tressan in the depths of his retreat, rallied his remaining strength to draw up for the use of the intendants instructions worthy of Tiberius. He expired in the task, like a tiger over his last prey. As to the articles relative to the sick, there was no means of adding any thing to the law: Father le Tellier was far exceeded by the infamous contrivance of that double provision which abandoned the dying, alone, to the representative of an inimical belief, and inflicted atrocious penalties on the relatives and friends who administered spiritual consolation to their kindred on the death-bed. But it was not the same with respect to marriage: here tyranny could still be envenomed. The greater part of the Protestants had resigned themselves, despite their extreme repugnance, to the necessity of submitting to the sacrament from the Catholic priests; but, almost everywhere, this same clergy, formerly so easy with respect to sacrilegious communions, now received affianced persons suspected of heresy with excessive rigor, and imposed on them painful, humiliating, and immeasurably prolonged ordeals before granting them the nuptial benediction. Sure of its victims, now that all other form of marriage was abolished, the clergy had no more concessions to make: in many dioceses, especially in Dauphiny, the curés compelled the betrothed children of Protestants *to curse their deceased parents*, and *to swear that they believed in their eternal damnation.*[2] . . . The Protestants, in despair, ceased to present themselves at the Church, and returned to pray and to marry in *the wilderness*, in the presence of their heroic pastors, a generation of martyrs that unceasingly sprung up anew at the foot of the scaffold; but there they again found the intendants to prosecute, and the tribunals to condemn them.[3] The correspondence of the intendants lays bare the double character of this persecution, coldly cruel on the part of the libertine and infidel

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 261.

[2] Correspondence of the intendants, cited by Lémontei, t. II. p. 157.

[3] Some Jansenist tribunals, through opposition to the Molinistic bishops, showed indulgence; but others entered violently into the spirit of the law; and oftenest, moreover, in cases of unlawful assemblages, there was no other judge than the intendant. The young pastors of the wilderness graduated, for the most part, from a seminary founded at Lausanne by Antoine Court, the father of the philosopher Court de Gébelin.

Digitized by Google

higher functionaries, grossly fanatical on that of the lower clergy. This period calls to mind, far more than that of 1685, those last days of antiquity, when the epicurean and sceptical heads of the Roman empire hypocritically joined with the priests of the popular heathenism in exterminating the Christians.

The Protestant emigration had commenced anew. Sweden endeavored to profit by it to repair her losses, by inviting the persecuted Frenchmen to seek a refuge in her midst. The government dared not refuse the Lutherans of Alsace the exemption secured to them by privileges guaranteed by the most solemn agreements, and Holland also obtained special conditions for her natives settled in France. The persecution did not rage long in its fullest intensity against our unhappy Calvinists: it was not slackened, however, for some years, until after important changes which were not long in occurring in the government.

The Duke de Bourbon and his counsellors had carried the same brutal thoughtlessness into external as into internal policy. *Monsieur le Duc* madly envied the young Duke of Orleans, the son of the Regent, the title of first prince of the blood, and could not endure the idea of seeing this rival, so insignificant in person, ascend the throne if the King should die.[1] His first thought, on arriving at power, was, therefore, to revive the plans of Alberoni and the Duchess du Maine against the branch of Orleans, and to concert with Spain to secure eventually to Philip V. or his children the reversion interdicted them by the treaty of Utrecht. In the blindness of a hatred almost without foundation, he preferred making the chances of his own branch one degree more remote to suffering the rights of the Duke of Orleans to subsist. His designs, scarcely outlined, were thwarted by a strange piece of intelligence from Madrid, — the abdication of Philip V. The hypochondriacal Philip, who had been revolving this project in his mind for some years, had effected it January 10, 1724, to the great vexation of his wife; and the crown of Spain had been transferred to the brow of Don Luis, a youth of sixteen, the eldest son of Philip and the late Queen, Louise of Savoy. It would have been very difficult to induce the Castilian oligarchy that had just

[1] The new Duke of Orleans, devoid of all political capacity, and all aptitude for things of this world, plunged into rigid Jansenistic devotion, as if to expiate the irregularities and impiety of his father; and after the death of his wife, a princess of the House of Baden, retired to a lodge within the jurisdiction of the Monastery of St. Genevieve, where he became wholly absorbed in pious works, and the study of Biblical controversy and texts.

Digitized by Google

succeeded to the power of the Italian Queen to enter into the secret designs of the Duke de Bourbon; but the new reign vanished like a shadow, with no other event than some scandals between the young King and his wife, one of those daughters of the Regent that carried vice and folly everywhere. Don Luis died of small-pox, August 30. Queen Elizabeth of Parma, and the French ambassador, the aged Tessé, united to force Philip to reascend the throne. This was not an easy matter. The grandees, who wished to reign in the name of the Infant Ferdinand, the second son of the late Queen Louise, set the theologians to work to persuade Philip, that, if he returned to the grandeur of this world, he would commit the same sin as a monk that should break his vows. Doctors were opposed to doctors, and the Pope's nuncio finally turned the scale. Philip resumed the title, Elizabeth the reality of power, to the great detriment of the peace of Europe.

The secret compact projected by the Duke de Bourbon was not, however, concluded. Philip V. required France, in expiation of the invasion of 1719, to put her blood and treasure at the disposal of Spain; and the Queen was accustomed to consider as an enemy every one that did not espouse all her passions and interests without reservation. They both desired that, in the congress opened at Cambrai to terminate the regulation of the Austro-Spanish interests, England should be compelled to restore Gibraltar, and the Emperor to dispossess himself of Mantua by giving to the Infants the investiture of Parma and Tuscany, with war as the alternative. The Duke de Bourbon, more through folly than audacity, would, perhaps, have consented to run this dangerous risk, in which case he might have encountered a serious obstacle in the aged Fleuri; but he was arrested by a nearer cause. Robert Walpole, who had been at the head of the English cabinet since the death of Lord Stanhope, and who had erected corruption into a diplomatic and parliamentary system with mathematical precision, bought all that was for sale, both at home and abroad. Madame de Prie inherited the English policy of Dubois in inheriting his pension; and it may be imagined that thenceforth *Monsieur le Duc* found it impossible to do any thing that would displease England. Not only was there no agreement with Spain against England and Austria; but Madame de Prie caused the failure of an important design conceived by a French diplomatist for the formation of that Russian alliance which the Regent

Digitized by Google

had been unwilling to accept. The point in question was to marry *Monsieur le Duc* to a daughter of Peter the Great, with the expectation of the throne of Poland after Augustus II.

The policy of France would have changed, perhaps, had Philip V. granted to Madame de Prie an earnestly desired favor. She wished to recompense the complaisance of her husband by a title, and to secure a high position to her children, of whom *Monsieur le Duc* believed himself the father. Bourbon, not daring to make the Marquis de Prie duke and peer in France, took a fancy to solicit for him "grandeeship" from the King of Spain. Philip and his wife rejected the request with disdain. Bourbon, seeing nothing more to do for himself with Spain, and retaining his apprehensions relative to the Duke of Orleans, then resolved to secure at the earliest moment a direct heir to the throne, should it be at the price of an open rupture with Philip V.; that is, to send back the Infanta Queen, a child of six, and to marry Louis XV. to some princess who could immediately render him a father. The young King was greatly strengthened by exercise and the chase; but his health experienced alarming crises from time to time. A violent fever, which endangered his life for two days, just as he had accomplished his fifteenth year (January 20, 1725), terrified the Duke de Bourbon, and determined him to hasten the matter. Fleuri did not oppose it while arranging in such a manner as to avoid the responsibility. The sending back of the Infanta was signified to the court of Spain with a precipitancy that aggravated the offence. The daughter of the Prince of Wales, the grand-daughter of George I., was solicited for Louis XV. It was insane to imagine that the Hanoverian King, who existed only through the Protestant principle, would rouse the indignation of England by causing a daughter of his race to purchase the crown of France by *apostasy;* and, on their side, the successors of Le Tellier could not give a Protestant Queen to France. George I. refused the hand of his granddaughter.

What England refused, Russia hastened to offer. Peter the Great had just died (June 8, 1725), leaving behind him a political machine so solidly constructed and skilfully launched, that it has never ceased, so to say, to go of itself. The widow of the Czar, the renowned Catharine, displaying in the service of her own greatness the genius which she had formerly shown for the safety of her husband on the banks of the Pruth, had appropriated to

Digitized by Google

herself the throne of the Romanoffs, to the prejudice of the heir, Peter Alexiowitz,[1] the son of that son whom the Czar Peter had pitilessly immolated to the security of his great work, like those symbolic victims that were buried beneath the foundations of antique cities. The dispossessed heir was the son of a sister-in-law of the Emperor Charles VI.; and Catharine feared that the partisans of this child would seek a support in Austria. She turned, therefore, to France, and offered Louis XV. her second daughter (afterwards the Czarina Elizabeth): the Russian princess would have embraced Catholicism, and Russia would have put her forces at the disposal of France in the event of a European war. As to Poland, Russia no longer even claimed the right to give it a Muscovite queen on aiding the Duke de Bourbon to seize the Polish crown when it should fall from the brow of Augustus II.: she herself proposed to the Duke de Bourbon to marry the daughter of the dethroned King, Stanislaus Leczinski, the unfortunate ally of Charles XII., who was vegetating in obscurity in the recesses of Alsace. This was a new and bold system of policy, but one that was too far above *Monsieur le Duc*. Madame de Prie was unwilling for her lover to go to Poland to reign. *Monsieur le Duc* thanked the Czarina loudly, but did not accept the proposal. These constant and useless efforts of Russia to unite with France during the first part of the eighteenth century are singularly remarkable. Their success might have effected a confederation between France, Russia, Spain, and Italy, against Austria and England. How long would this association have lasted? and how far would it have been able to agree respecting Poland and Turkey? This matter is very obscure; but it is certain that there was no serious motive, no reason of public interest, in the obstinate refusals by which the court of Versailles responded to the assiduities of St. Petersburg.

The proposals of the Czarina contributed indirectly to give the great affair of the marriage of Louis XV. the most unexpected termination. What Madame de Prie sought was a queen who would owe her every thing, who would have no support either in France or abroad, and whose character promised gratitude and docility. After passing in review all the princesses of Europe, the favorite fixed precisely on that poor daughter of a fallen King

[1] Catharine pretended that her husband had designated her as his heir, and caused herself to be proclaimed by the soldiers. According to the legislation of Peter the Great, the natural heir, whether son or daughter, was called to the throne, unless the last sovereign had designated another successor.

Digitized by Google

whom Catharine had wished to marry to the Duke de Bourbon. Fleuri approved it, and induced the King to consent with childish carelessness. Stanislaus Leczinski, and his wife and daughter, who were living at Wissembourg, in Alsace, on a pension granted them through pity by the French government, thought themselves dreaming when they received the letter from *Monsieur le Duc* informing them of this marvellous turn of fortune. All three fell on their knees to thank God. The joy of Stanislaus was scarcely tempered by the declaration of *Monsieur le Duc*, that France did not design to draw any political consequences from this marriage; and the promise to make no effort to reascend the throne of Poland appeared to cost him little in this first intoxication. The espousal of Louis XV. and Maria Leczinska was celebrated, September 4, 1725, in the chapel at Fontainebleau. The Queen was nearly seven years older than her husband.

The European public received surprise after surprise. The marriage of Louis XV. had been preceded by an event much more astonishing even than this marriage, and which was the immediate consequence of the sending back of the Infanta: this was the reconciliation of the two mortal enemies, Philip V. and Charles VI. Philip, irritated at the coldness which the Duke de Bourbon testified towards his interests, had already secretly entered into a direct negotiation with the Emperor, before knowing that his daughter had been deprived of the crown of France. After the sending back of the Infanta, Philip and his wife thought only of avenging themselves at any price. As to Charles VI., he was ruled by a fixed idea to which he sacrificed every thing, — to secure his inheritance intact to his daughters. As early as 1713, having as yet no children, he had made a decree prescribing the indivisibility of his estates, and commanding that his inheritance should pass to the female line in default of a male child. This decree was at once derogatory to the particular laws of most of the Austrian States, — laws excluding the female succession, — and to the family compact by which Leopold I. had formerly provided, that if his two sons, Joseph and Charles, should die without male posterity, the daughters of the elder, Joseph, should succeed in preference to those of Charles. The law of Charles VI. had long remained confined within the Austrian Council of State; but December 6, 1724, the Emperor determined to issue it solemnly, under the title of the Pragmatic Sanction, in favor of the two daughters that had been born to him since 1713. He had already compelled his nieces, the daugh-

Digitized by Google

ters of Joseph I., to renounce all their rights, and had married them only on this condition to the electoral princes of Saxony and Bavaria.[1] From that time, his only thought was to cause his Pragmatic Sanction to be accepted and guaranteed both by the different parts of the Austrian monarchy and by the foreign powers.

The assent of Spain was invaluable to the Emperor; and he was too much dissatisfied with his ancient allies, the English and the Dutch, to be arrested long by consideration for them. The treaty of Utrecht, which mingled so strangely in Belgium the seigniorial right of the Emperor and the protecting authority of Holland, had speedily caused dissension between the two powers thus placed in juxtaposition; and the treaty of the *Barrier* had regulated only after much discussion the limits of that military protection which maintained itself by its own hands at the expense of the country protected (November 15, 1715). A few years later, another question had reawakened the reciprocal bitterness. In 1718, a shipping merchant of St. Malo, who had brought back two vessels richly freighted from China to Dunkirk, and had been unable to obtain permission from the East-India Company to sell his merchandise in France, had carried his cargoes to Ostend, fixed the seat of his operations at that port, and established an association there for the East-India trade.[2] The Emperor erected this association into a privileged company, December 19, 1722. This was an indemnity offered to Flanders for that iniquitous closing of the Scheldt formerly imposed by Holland on conquered Spain. The Flemish Company speedily became prosperous. Holland, then England, complained loudly, and insisted that the Emperor was infringing on the treaties in opening the seas to his Flemish subjects. The Regent through deference to England, and Spain through hostility to Austria, had supported these complaints. But now every thing was changed on the part of Spain. An intimate understanding had been established between the Southerners, both the Italian and the Spanish refugees, who held an important place in the council of the Emperor, and the secret envoy of Philip V., the Dutch *convert*, Ripperda, a daring and eccentric adventurer, a sort of

[1] Coxe, *Maison d'Autriche*, t. IV. ch. lxxxiv.; *Journal de Louis XV.* p. 66; Dumont, t. VII. part ii. p. 103.

[2] Perhaps he would not pay the ten per cent that the company imposed on the merchants of St. Malo in this trade. This took place before the union of the East-India and West-India Companies in the hands of Law and his general company.

Digitized by Google

parody on Alberoni, who had replaced Alberoni in the confidence of the Queen of Spain. From these cabals resulted the most extraordinary combination. By a triple treaty, signed April 30–May 1, 1725, at Vienna, Charles VI. and Philip V. renounced all pretensions to each other's respective States, with a full, reciprocal amnesty to the partisans of the two reconciled rivals; Philip guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, and opened the ports of Spain to Austrian subjects, and the merchants of the Hanseatic towns, on the same conditions as to the most favored nations; Charles promised his good offices in obtaining the restitution of Gibraltar and Mahon to Spain; and a defensive alliance was agreed upon. By a secret engagement, which does not appear ever to have been put into writing, the Emperor promised his two daughters, the Archduchesses Maria Theresa and Maria Anna, to the two sons of Philip V. by his second marriage, Don Carlos and Don Philip, and engaged to coöperate by force in the recovery of Gibraltar and Mahon.[1]

This strange compact, which seems the dream of a diseased imagination, by grafting the younger branch of the Bourbons on the Austrian stock, would have destroyed anew the balance of power in Europe, and reconstructed the monarchy of Charles V. It is not certain that Charles VI. ever seriously had the intention of keeping promises opposed by his wife and almost all his German counsellors, who were at that time paving the way for the marriage of the two archduchesses to the sons of the Duke of Lorraine. At all events, he had given Spain nothing but secret promises, which he could always deny, for very positive results.

What was known of the treaties of Vienna sufficed, nevertheless, greatly to agitate Europe. George I. hastened to his German States to watch over the movements of the Emperor; and, September 3, a defensive alliance was signed at Hanover between England, France, and the King of Prussia, Frederick William, the son-in-law of George I. They pledged themselves by a secret article to procure the abolition of the Ostend Company. The two Protestant monarchs exacted that to the treaty of Hanover should be annexed other articles, relative to the affairs of Poland and to the maintenance of the treaty of Oliva (of 1660), which had guaranteed, with France as security, the liberties of the Po-

[1] Dumont, t. VII. part ii. p. 106; W. Coxe, *l'Espagne sous les Bourbons*; Lémontei, t. II. p. 226.

Digitized by Google

lish Protestants. An event, frightful in itself, and still more fatal in its future consequences, had recently roused the indignation of all Protestant Europe. The Lutheran inhabitants of Thorn having sacked the Jesuit college of that town, and broken or torn down the images of the saints[1] (July 17, 1724), in consequence of an affray provoked by the pupils of the Jesuits, the Polish diet, with frenzied rage, had arrested and brought to trial the magistrates and the most notable citizens for having excited or not having prevented this tumult. A great number were condemned to death by a fanatical tribunal: the Protestant gymnasium and churches of Thorn were confiscated, and given to Catholic communities. Condemnation to death would have been impossible without the testimony of the Jesuits of Thorn. The Pope's legate himself, at the solicitation of the Chancellor of Poland, wrote to them that they could not take an oath in such a matter without canonical irregularity. They evaded the question, and caused two members of their congregation who were not in orders to be sworn. The victims were given up to punishment; and, some time after, the Jesuits celebrated their triumph by performing in their church an allegorical piece taken from the Bible, in which the semblances of ten decapitated heads were displayed.[2] The indignation was general, both among the Protestant nations, and among all who were no longer ruled by the frenzy of sectarian hatred. England and Prussia through religious spirit, and Russia through policy, addressed threatening complaints to Poland; and the Duke de Bourbon, by virtue of the treaty of Oliva, found himself constrained to second the protests of the Northern powers at the very moment when he was so cruelly persecuting the French Protestants.[3]

The remonstrances and threats ended in nothing. Catharine I.,

[1] It is proved, by the complaint of the Jesuits themselves, that the holy ciborium was respected, at the prayer of one of the monks.

[2] Lémontei, t. II. p. 239. — See the sentence promulgated under the form of an *assessorial decree* of the King of Poland, October 30, in Dumont, t. VII. part ii. p. 89; and the certificates of the execution of this decree, December 5, 1724, *ibid.* p. 97.

[3] Shortly after (1731), another persecution took place against the Protestants in Southern Germany. Protestantism having invaded the arch-duchy of Salzburg in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the Salzburg mountaineers, an intelligent and laborious race, demanding of their archbishop the liberty of conscience, the prelate called in the Austrians; and thousands of these poor people were expelled from their country. They carried their trade, the sculpture of wood, to Nuremberg; spread themselves through Protestant Germany; and the district of Salzburg remained depopulated and ruined. — See a very interesting article by M. Michiels, in the *Siècle* of October 9, 1858.

Digitized by Google

steeped in voluptuousness, forgot on the throne the great qualities through which she had ascended it, and followed but feebly the traditions of her spouse. As to the Protestant powers, they were not disposed to carry their demonstrations so far as to make war for religion and humanity. The affair of Thorn, the worthy result of the education that the Polish nobility received from the Jesuits, and the worthy sequel to those persecutions which had formerly cost Poland the Cossack tribes, did not, therefore, immediately bear fruit; but the germs of discord and vengeance continued to brood there, and were turned to advantage by Russia. Russia adroitly affected towards Europe the zeal of a new convert to civilization, and set herself up as the protectress of tolerance and humanity. The new European generation, about to become absorbed by the exclusive idea of the reaction against fanaticism, conceived a disdain for Poland, as a land of superstition and retrogressive anarchy; disregarded the free and generous genius which her fatal instructors had perverted, but had been unable to stifle in her; and lost the recollection of her past services, which were to be remembered too late!

From 1725 to 1726, it was the alliance of Vienna, and not the catastrophe of Thorn, that threatened Europe with a general war. The allies of Vienna and those of Hanover sought auxiliaries on each side; and all Europe seemed on the point of being divided between them. Nothing was talked of but military preparations. An ordinance of February 27, 1726, the work of Pâris Duvernei, reorganized the militia, that imperfect reserve of the active army, on a greatly improved plan. It was formed in a hundred battalions of six hundred men each: this was a reserve of sixty thousand men for an army of a hundred and thirty-five thousand. Good officers were given to the battalions; and, without snatching the militia-men from their provinces or their labor, they were subjected to regular exercises. Unfortunately, the drawing by lot, under a system of arbitrariness and corruption, was not executed with honesty and sincerity; and this kind of *conscription* was infected with iniquitous abuses, almost as much as the recruital of the regular army with its fraudulent or compulsory enlistments.[1]

[1] Lémontei (t. II. p. 252) is mistaken in seeing in the militia, so often employed by Louis XIV., a wholly new institution; but he gives, on this subject, interesting details concerning our military condition. Recruital then cost three millions annually: the generalities of the north of France furnished proportionally almost double the enlistments of those of the south; and the soldiers of the north deserted much

Digitized by Google

France saw herself, with astonishment, hurried towards a war as foreign to her interests as her feelings, and provoked by the most puerile causes. This insane struggle was about to break out amidst the most unfavorable internal circumstances. So soon after a bankruptcy that had liquidated the public debt, financial disorder was already reappearing, owing to the avidity, the waste, and the unbridled pomp, of *Monsieur le Duc* and Madame de Prie, and owing also to the thirty-five millions which the useless depreciation of the coin had cost the treasury.[1] It had already become necessary to choose between a new bankruptcy and the creation of new resources, since economy was impossible with such rulers. As early as June 5, 1725, two months after the sending back of the Infanta, Duvernei had caused a tax of one-fiftieth to be decreed on all incomes for twelve years; that is, he reëstablished the income-tax already attempted from 1710 to 1717, made it a quota-tax, and proportioned it exactly. The collection was to be in kind, as Vauban desired, and to begin everywhere within six weeks, — an extravagant precipitancy, where any thing so difficult and so complicated as a tax in kind was in question. The fiftieth was reputed destined to be employed in the extinction of the *rentes* on the State, both perpetual and for life, which still exceeded fifty-one millions a year, despite the enormous arbitrary reductions which they had suffered. Opposition was expected from the parliament: it was resolved to anticipate its remonstrances; and, June 8, *Monsieur le Duc* induced the King to carry to the parliament, in a bed of justice, the edict of the fiftieth, accompanied with other edicts creating masterships for a pecuniary price in all trades, reëstablishing at five per cent the interest which it had been vainly attempted to lower to three and one-third per cent, etc. Every member of the parliament

less frequently than the others. Voluntary enlistment, or that reputed such, gave annually from eighteen to twenty thousand men, two-thirds of whom came from the towns. In the last days of the monarchy, the number of Frenchmen that drew for the militia, in ordinary years, was from three hundred and thirty-eight to three hundred and thirty-nine thousand; and the annual levy of militia, nearly fourteen thousand five hundred.

[1] Duvernei affirms, in the preamble to the edict of June 5, 1725, that the Regent had left more than forty millions of new floating debt; but this is improbable. There are valuable details of information in this preamble. Duvernei, to excuse the embarrassment in which the Duke de Bourbon already found himself, explains that the Regency had subsisted, in great part, on the increase in value, recoinage, and *restamping* of the coin; that it had made nearly two hundred and thirty-four millions by these from 1716 to 1720, and nearly one hundred and twenty millions from 1720 to 1724. — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 289.

Digitized by Google

abstained from the idle formality of voting on a compulsory registration; and the people received the young King and his train in gloomy silence.

The fiftieth, a tax equitable in itself, but exceedingly wrong in coming in addition to so many other taxes, was followed by exactions wholly feudal. Towards the close of the preceding administration, after the death of Dubois, it had been suggested to the Duke of Orleans to reclaim the ancient crown right of *Joyous Accession* (*le joyeux avénement*), by virtue of which the new King could compel the purchase, by a tax, of the confirmation of all privileges given or confirmed by his predecessors. In a community in which every right, whether individual or collective, existed only as a privilege,[1] all, or nearly so, were affected by this tax: the members of the parliaments and of other superior courts were alone excepted from it through policy. *Monsieur le Duc*, on entering the ministry, had suspended the *Joyous Accession*, in order to render himself popular: it was reëstablished in July, 1725, and was farmed out, for twenty-four millions, to revenue-farmers, who obtained from the nation nearly double this amount. Another feudal tax, the *Queen's Girdle* (*la ceinture de la reine*), was levied on the trades. Meanwhile, the collection of the fiftieth was commenced with extreme confusion and difficulty. No general regulation having been established, the tax was farmed out in certain generalities, and was collected by the government in others: everywhere it encountered the most lively opposition. The parliaments of Bordeaux, Brittany, and Burgundy, had refused to register the edict; and the entire body of the clergy, irritated at the blow dealt to their immunities by a tax that confounded them among the mass of the tax-payers, joined in the resistance.

The triennial assembly of the clergy met, at this very moment, at Paris, agitated with the bitter passions kept up by the interminable quarrel of the *Unigenitus* Constitution. This ecclesiastical warfare had reached a most fantastic and curious phase. The accommodation of 1720, judged insufficient at Rome, and ill observed in France, was almost annulled in fact; and the *constitutionnaire* bishops had not ceased to torment the members of their clergy who did not accept the Bull without restrictions. But it had happened, in 1724, that the careless and voluptuous pontiff who had placed the red hat on the head of Dubois, Innocent XIII., had been

[1] There was nothing, in fact, outside this system, except freehold estates.
[2] Lémontei, t. II. p. 211; Bailli, *Hist. des Finances*, t. II. p. 108.

Digitized by Google

succeeded by an austere old man attached to the opinions of *Thomism;* much less remote, consequently, from Jansenius than from Molina, and sympathizing strongly with the Cardinal de Noailles. Benedict XIII. (Orsini) was indeed that *Christian Pope*, that pontiff of *the narrow way*, whom Pascal and Domat had invoked in vain. Unable to retract the Bull without denying the *infallibility* so dear to Rome, he would have willingly annulled it by explanations that would have completely changed its spirit: he only desired, that, *for the honor of the Holy See*, Noailles should commence by a declaration of submission more complete than in 1720. Benedict XIII. and Noailles agreed so well as to the substance, that they would have agreed without difficulty as to the form; but a genuine rebellion broke out against the Holy Father in the Sacred College, in the Company of Jesus, and in the majority of the French episcopate. It was then seen what was to be thought of the real beliefs of the ultramontane faction, and the value that it set on its fundamental dogma, infallibility. The French *constitutionnaire* bishops threatened to create a schism if the Pope betrayed the common cause by a *shameful* accommodation; and the Sacred College showed clearly that it admitted the infallibility of the Pope only when assisted by the cardinals; that is, the infallibility, no longer of the head of the Church, but of the curates of Rome presided over by their bishop; for the cardinals had been nothing else in primitive times. Certain cardinals, fearing that the Pope might publish a dogmatic decree in an anti-Molinistic direction, added that the Pope had authority only to condemn error, but not to affirm truth.[1] No foe could have dealt ultramontane Catholicism ruder blows than it inflicted on itself.

Meanwhile, the immediate end was attained: the compromise proved abortive. The Pope recoiled before this outbreak, in which Fleuri had largely participated. The preceptor of the King had derogated from his habitual moderation when Jansenism was in question, since Father Quesnel had handled him so roughly for having written against the Jansenists, without serious conviction and without knowledge of the matter. His hostile feelings were kept alive, moreover, by his confessor, the Sulpitian Polet, who had over him the influence, not of devotion, but of habit, and who, like all the congregation of St. Sulpice, was devoted to the *constitutionnaire* faction. Fleuri had signified to the Pope, in the name of the King, that his briefs would not be received in France, unless they had been drawn up with the counsel of the cardinals.

[1] *Journal de Dorsanne*, t. V. pp. 49, 58, 202.

Digitized by Google

Meanwhile, the edict of the fiftieth appeared. Under Louis XIV., the income-tax of 1710 had not been designed at first to spare the clergy; but the ecclesiastical order had hastened to ransom itself by a *gratuity*, and had obtained at this price the express recognition of its privileges. A unanimous outcry arose from it against the fiftieth, which was not susceptible of redemption. The assembly addressed remonstrances to the King; then, as if to avenge itself on *Monsieur le Duc*, plunged violently into theological discussions, which it had not permission to broach, these assemblies being habitually designed only for the material interests of the clergy. It demanded provincial councils against the adversaries of the Bull, and made so much noise, that *Monsieur le Duc*, in spite of Fleuri, prescribed the dissolution of the assembly, October 27. The assembly obeyed, but left the government a farewell letter so violent, that Bourbon caused the original to be seized, and the register to be stricken out. "The bishops' mouths are closed," wrote the assembly: "they are forbidden to instruct the King and the members of the Church when the faith is in the utmost peril," etc.

These frigid declamations, these parodies on the fathers of the Church, would have been simply ridiculous, in ordinary times, on the part of so many scandalous and sceptical prelates; but, associated with the refusals of taxes, they contributed to keep alive the general agitation. All classes were equally discontented. Bourbon and his mistress, who were very willing to economize at the expense of others, had authorized Duvernei to reduce the King's household anew, and to revoke all pensions granted since the death of Louis XIV. (February–November, 1725): this fell on the court nobility. As to the people, their irritation increased with their sufferings. To the subversion of the coin and of commerce was added dearth. In the course of the summer of 1725, the extreme dearness of bread excited violent riots in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and at Rouen, Caen, and Lisieux. Saint-Simon accuses *Monsieur le Duc* of having created the dearth by criminal speculations in grain: this imputation does not appear well founded. The State made sacrifices amounting to ten or eleven millions in order to feed Paris: but there was much wastefulness, and probably malversations, on the part of the subaltern agents; for these sacrifices did not prevent the Parisians from paying the exorbitant price of nine sous a pound for bread.[1] The urban grain riots

[1] Lémontei, t. II. p. 218. The *prévôt des marchands* having been removed during this crisis, the King ordered the municipal council to elect another, in these terms: "It

Digitized by Google

were succeeded by rural riots against the fiftieth. Bands of women, armed with pitchforks, marched through the country to the sound of the drum, threatening to burn whomsoever should collect or pay the tax. During the first months of 1726, the state of affairs only grew worse. Had the tax been fully paid, the deficit would still have been eleven millions at the end of the year.

The government was on the road to ruin; but a sudden change of persons and system might yet turn it aside before it reached the brink, and this change was inevitable. *Monsieur le Duc* was clinging by a single hair. Almost from his accession, Bourbon had entered upon a secret struggle against the only real power that there was in France, — against Fleuri; and had spared nothing to supplant him with the youthful Louis. December 18, 1725, an attempt had been made to accustom the King to work with his prime minister without the presence of his preceptor. The Queen, wholly devoted to those who had placed the crown on her head, was the instrument of this intrigue. One day, when the King was with Fleuri, she sent for him to her apartments: he found there *Monsieur le Duc* and Duvernei, who conversed with him, under some pretext, on public affairs. Fleuri waited a long time; but Louis did not return. He understood what had happened, wrote a farewell letter to the King, and went to take up his abode in the country-house of the Sulpitians, at Issy, declaring that he had long desired to retire, and to put an interval between the agitations of the world and death. The Queen gave the letter to her husband. Louis quitted her in silence, and went to pout in his wardrobe. He lacked energy to resolve on a course; and it was necessary for some one to counsel him to do what he desired. A groom of the stool, the Duke de Mortemart, rendered him this service, and procured from him a written order to *Monsieur le Duc* to recall Fleuri. Bourbon had the humiliation of being compelled to entreat Fleuri to return. The old man, *so desirous of retirement*, was at Versailles the very next morning. This ordeal had proved his authority impregnable. The sinister

is our desire that you proceed immediately to do this, and that, in thus proceeding, you give your suffrages to the candidate Lambert." We see what were the municipal liberties. The election of the consul-judges (the tribunal of commerce) was not much more real. The judge and the four consuls in office chose sixty merchants or traders of Paris to their liking, to elect their successors with them. The only restriction was, that there should not be more than five merchants of the same corporation. — See Ordinance of March 18, 1728; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 307.

Digitized by Google

ugliness of *Monsieur le Duc*, and his utter lack of mental attractions, had foiled all his efforts to please the King. As to the Queen, a good and virtuous person, with a sweet face without beauty, and a mediocre mind without brilliancy and attractiveness, fitted to inspire esteem and not love, she would not have ruled an ardent and impressionable young man, much less a cold and unfeeling nature like that of Louis XV.

Fleuri was not anxious to push his triumph to extremities: he would have asked nothing better than to leave *Monsieur le Duc* the name of power, while retaining the reality; but this was impossible with De Prie and Duvernei. Again and again, Fleuri urged Bourbon to dismiss these two objects of public animadversion: he could not prevail on him to do so. He was patient some months longer. At the beginning of June, Bourbon had a moment of rejoicing. He had striven in vain to appease the resentment of Spain. England, on her side, instead of entreating, had threatened and acted: three English fleets had been despatched to the Baltic, the coasts of Spain, and the waters between Spain and America, to prevent Russia from uniting with the Emperor, and to intercept the Spanish galleons. These movements caused discord and confusion in the Spanish council, and determined the downfall of the minister-adventurer, Ripperda, the negotiator of the treaty of Vienna. Bourbon fancied that he was about to conquer peace without, and to strengthen his authority within. Meanwhile, his own fall was resolved upon. June 11, the King, on setting out from Versailles for Rambouillet, said to *Monsieur le Duc*, with a more gracious smile than usual, "My cousin, do not make me wait supper." A few hours after, the Duke received a harshly laconic note from Louis, commanding him to retire till further orders to his château at Chantilly. He returned to the political nothingness for which he was made, and nevermore reappeared on the horizon till his death, which occurred fourteen years after. Madame de Prie was exiled to Normandy, where, pining with ennui and restrained ambition, she poisoned herself to put an end to it. Pâris Duvernei was sent to the Bastille, where Madame de Prie and he had not hesitated to lodge their personal enemies. France applauded the downfall of this second Regency, worse, in some respects, than the first.[1]

[1] *Mém. de Villars*, p. 325. Here ends the book of Lémontei, a book ingenious, highly colored, witty,—too witty, perhaps; in short, the most distinguished historical work produced by the school of Voltaire since Rulhière and his *Anarchie de Pologne*. The somewhat studied brilliancy of the form should not make us disregard the so-

Digitized by Google

SECTION II. — THE CARDINAL DE FLEURI.

Fleuri, who was then seventy-three, took the direction of affairs at an age when most men have long since renounced active life. He did not attribute to himself the title of prime minister, but induced Louis XV. to declare, like Louis XIV. formerly, that he was about henceforth to reign by himself, — a puerile parody of a great speech, a falsehood which would always remain a falsehood. Fleuri only caused the red hat to be given him which he had lost the first time through the malevolence of *Monsieur le Duc* (September, 1726): he judged it necessary to have no superior in rank among the French clergy. The personal changes effected by Fleuri in the administration relate to names too obscure to deserve remembrance in history. After an insignificant reaction against the agents of *Monsieur le Duc* and Madame de Prie, the court fell into a dead calm. After the splendid grandeur, the elegant and sumptuous pleasures, of the youth of the Great King, there had been the somewhat stiff and constrained majesty of his old age, then the mad license of the Regent and of Madame de Prie: there was now silence and ennui under a septuagenarian minister and a youthful king, who, hitherto timid and almost shy with women, without taste for the pleasures of the mind and the imagination, showed an inclination for nothing but play and the chase.

Fleuri strove to lull every thing to sleep within as without, and to treat France and Europe like his royal pupil. He began by doing every thing compatible with his plan of government; a very simple plan, — to calm the irritation that animated all classes of society. Very ignorant in economical and financial matters, he nevertheless understood, that, after the great bankruptcies which had reduced the debt, the government could do what would have been impossible before these bankruptcies; that is, sustain itself in ordinary times, in times of peace, without other innovation than a rigorous economy, — an economy that suited his tastes as well as the state of affairs. He could not satisfy the court with respect to pensions, without derogating from this; but he did something for the nobility in general by creating six companies of *cadets*, designed to train officers at the King's expense (December 16,

lidity of the substance. No one hitherto has known, like Lémontei, the unpublished sources of the history of the eighteenth century; and it is much to be regretted that his work stopped at 1726.

Digitized by Google

1726). He gave the clergy a satisfaction much more brilliant. October 8, a declaration appeared in favor of the absolute freedom of ecclesiastical property: it was by pure misunderstanding, it was said, that the edict of the fiftieth had been applied to the property of the clergy. "The rights of the churches, dedicated to God, and outside the commerce of men, are irrevocable, and cannot be subjected to any confirmation or other tax."[1] These were the maxims of the Middle Ages in all their purity: the State was utterly routed by the Church. The assembly of the clergy, again convened extraordinarily in 1726, responded to this solemn confirmation of its privileges by a *gratuity* of five millions. The clergy had long since learned, that, to maintain the *right*, there must be concessions *in fact*.

General interests had their share like privileged interests. A fortnight after the fall of *Monsieur le Duc*, the administration had begun to raise the value of the coin as an extraordinary resource: a declaration of June 15, 1726, promised that the coin should thenceforth be fixed at seven hundred and forty livres, nine sous, one denier, a mark of fine gold; and fifty-one livres, three sous, three deniers, a mark of fine silver (forty-nine livres a mark of coined silver, on account of the alloy).[2] This promise was better kept than so many analogous promises had been; the nominal value of the coin was thenceforth subjected only to almost insensible modifications; and it may be said that the principle of the stability of the coin from that time became a part of social economy. To-day, after a century and a quarter, the silver mark stands at fifty-four francs.[3] The most commendable claim to honor of Fleuri's ministry would be that of having blotted out one of the worst economic scourges which France had endured since the feudal ages; but it is not certain that Fleuri really knew the full scope of the service which he rendered, and that he did any thing more than permit the execution of a project of Duvernei himself.

Divers reductions of taxes followed the declaration concerning the coin: there was some diminution of the villain-taxes, and some abatement of the arrears. The fiftieth was modified, then completely abolished in July, 1727: it had, it was said, yielded only three millions. The general tax was diminished twelve or thirteen millions: it was, in 1726 and 1727, about one hundred

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 301.
[2] *Art de vérifier les Dates*, p. 614; Melon, ap. *Économistes financiers*, p. 784.
[3] Written in 1851.

Digitized by Google

and eighty millions, at forty-nine francs a mark. The reduction of the expenditures coincided with the reduction of the taxes. This severe economy contributed, with the character of the King, to extinguish the splendors of Versailles, and to set off the more vividly the luxury, the pleasures, the active and sparkling life, of Paris: contrary to the times of Louis XIV., it was now the city that attracted the court.

Economy apart, the diminution of the taxes had been compensated for on the spot by the increase of the receipts. The fall of *Monsieur le Duc* had restored confidence to the farmers of the revenue. The company of the farmers-general, which had replaced, as early as 1723, the direct administration by the government, established in 1721, after the overthrow of the *System*, yielded only fifty-five millions for the five great farms: a new lease of August, 1726, obtained eighty millions for them. Some other duties and revenues, indeed, had been added to the farms. The lessees still made a magnificent bargain; for Fleuri, without knowing the value of the concession that he made them, left them the arrears due to the administrators under the government, from which they derived more than sixty millions, and made, besides, ninety-six millions in six years, the duration of their lease. The lease of 1732 produced a new increase; the farms and the general receipts united yielded, for 1733, one hundred and fifty-six millions, instead of one hundred and forty in 1727; the whole taxation, through the increase of consumption and the diminution of valueless paper, amounted to two hundred millions, instead of one hundred and eighty millions.[1]

One class of society, notwithstanding, had been struck, in 1726, in the midst of the concessions made to all the other classes, — this was the unhappy creditors of the State, the habitual victims of the monarchy. Fleuri had neither sufficient energy nor sufficient positive knowledge to follow a plan of conduct without deviation. If economy could now suffice to govern, it was, nevertheless, on the condition, either that the taxes should not be diminished, or that recourse should be had to borrowing to provide for the excess of the expenditures over the receipts; an excess which the reduction of the expenses, and the increase of the farms, in August, 1726,

[1] Bailli, t. II. p. 111; *Mém de Villars*, pp. 326, 341. Villars speaks of a revenue of two hundred and thirty millions in 1733 (p. 439); but there must be exaggeration in this. Dutot (*Économistes financiers*, p. 943) says, on the authority of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, that the real revenue amounted to only one hundred and eighty-two millions, all charges deducted.

Digitized by Google

were not yet sufficient to cover. Fleuri desired neither means, and preferred to authorize an iniquitous proceeding, and to do what Duvernei himself had rejected; namely, to declare a new partial bankruptcy. A mass of life-*rentes*, already reduced to four per cent by the *visa*, and which had not been paid for two years, was repudiated. The small perpetual *rentes* under ten livres on the villain-taxes were abolished, which fell on precisely the poorest creditors; and an annual saving was thus effected of thirteen millions and a half, without counting twenty-seven millions of arrears that were annulled November, 1726. The parliament remonstrated; and a hundred and fifty thousand holders of *rentes* clamored so loudly, that Fleuri took a step backward, and reëstablished the *rentes* under three hundred livres, and others belonging to the creditors in the most straitened circumstances, to the amount of one million eight hundred thousand francs (January, 1728).[1]

This was the only violent and irregular act of Fleuri's administration. The constant increase of the receipts calmed the alarm of the aged minister, and permitted him thenceforth to follow his natural inclination. In short, no reforms, no innovations, no projects: such was the character of this administration. Things being left to their free course, so far as established institutions permitted, it was found that to govern little was to govern well, in many respects, in comparison with those who had governed much and ill. It was governing well, at least for some time, until France had recovered breath from the economic tempests that had followed the tempests of war. The life of a great people is not a thing so simple that it can go on long in this manner by routine alone, without general ideas and enlightened guidance. Provisionally, manufactures and commerce, after the unheard-of disorder from 1720 to 1726, revived with marvellous promptitude, and displayed an activity worthy of admiration; prosperity was seen to spring up anew, and increase from day to day, if not in the country, at least in the towns, the workshops, and the seaports. We shall show, a little later, what a powerful impulse was manifested spontaneously by the maritime and colonial movement of France,—a subject of the highest importance in the study of the national genius.

The commercial prosperity, and the financial *statu quo* of which we have just spoken, tell sufficiently that the general war, imminent under *Monsieur le Duc* and through him, had not broken

[1] Villars, pp. 326, 329, 331, 351; Bailli, t. II. pp. 111, 112; Lacretelle, t. II. p. 67.

Digitized by Google

out. The agitation caused Europe by the double league of Vienna and Hanover had been for some time prolonged, and allies had been recruited on either side. The counsellors of the Czarina, bought by Austria, or wounded by the little value which the French government had set on the Russian alliance, had induced Catharine to give her assent to the treaty of Vienna, and her guarantee to the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VI. (August 6, 1726). The eccentric and fantastic King of Prussia, who disliked his father-in-law, George I., and who feared being shut in with his young army, the sole object of his affections, between the masses of Russia and Austria, abandoned the Hanoverian alliance, treated secretly with the Emperor, and also guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, on condition that Charles VI. would promise him the integral reversion of the duchies of Jülich and Berg, after the existing possessor (the Elector Palatine), (March 12, 1727). By way of compensation, Holland (August 9, 1726), Sweden (March 25, 1727), and Denmark (April 16, 1727) rallied to the support of England and France. Fleuri, while coöperating with England in extending the Hanoverian alliance, used every effort to dispel the storm, and with reason; for a war so unfounded would have been high treason against humanity: unhappily, the particular course which he followed to maintain the peace of Europe, and which became systematic with him, does not deserve the same praises as the end. He linked himself to England like the Regent and *Monsieur le Duc*, and formed a close personal intimacy with the two brothers Walpole, one of whom, Robert, ruled England, while the other, Horace, the ambassador to France,[1] directed British diplomacy on the Continent. With Fleuri, this policy can no longer be explained by a shameful venality. Horace Walpole had gained possession of the aged prelate by adroit flatteries, and especially by hastening to see him at Issy, when he feigned to retire, — a skilful calculation which the old man took for an impulse of affection.

There was, nevertheless, a more general cause for the conduct of Fleuri: when a policy is thus espoused successively by minds and in systems so different, it must have some reason for existing, beyond private interests or feelings. There was, indeed, a reason; namely, that the peace of Europe depended on the good understanding of France and England, and that the Walpoles desired

[1] The latter must not be confounded with the second Horace Walpole, the son of Robert, so well known in the French society of the eighteenth century.

Digitized by Google

peace at any price as much as Fleuri himself: they judged it useful to the material interests of England, and necessary to the consolidation of that singular system which may be called constitutional corruption, and which consisted in lulling the English nation,[1] and buying its representatives. But was it necessary to make France purchase this pacific understanding, quite as much desired at London as at Paris, by sacrificing a part of her vital interests, by letting her navy dwindle away systematically, precisely when her colonies were growing from hour to hour, and when her merchant-shipping was receiving from the sole force of private activity that vigorous impulse which Colbert had formerly labored so much to impart to it from the hand of the State? The government abandoned the sea[2] at the moment when the nation was making a generous effort to gain possession of it. We shall see hereafter the deplorable consequences of this lack of harmony.

The passions of the Spanish government were the great difficulty in the way of that general pacification so much desired by Fleuri; none of the other States seriously wishing war. Philip V. and his wife had no personal hatred against Fleuri, and would have willingly accepted his offers of reconciliation, provided that France would separate from England. Contrary to the universal expectation, the fall of Ripperda, the prime minister of Spain, had not rendered the cabinet of Madrid more pacific. Ripperda had fallen, not on account of his warlike disposition, but of his indiscretions, his fickleness, his boasting contradicted by events, and that antipathy so easily aroused in Spain against foreigners. His successor, the Catalan José Patiño, a distinguished administrator, trained by Alberoni, continued to arm, and to lavish Spanish gold on Austria, in order to purchase auxiliaries to the league of Vienna. Philip and Elizabeth clung with eagerness to the very natural and national idea of retaking Gibraltar, and attempted to realize it with the blind temerity which was the habitual characteristic of the Queen, and which became that of the King in the rare intervals of his hypochondriacal atony. About the commence-

[1] To lull the political spirit, be it understood; for Robert Walpole powerfully aided the commercial impulse.

[2] It is evident that this abandonment could not have been wholly complete. For instance, in 1728, a squadron was despatched to bombard Tripoli in order to punish the Barbary pirates: the Tripolitans submitted, the following year, to the required satisfaction. — See, on the abandonment of our naval forces, the warm representations of the Count de Toulouse, and of Valincourt, Secretary-General of the Marine, to the Regent, to *Monsieur le Duc*, and to the Cardinal de Fleuri; *Mém. sur la Marine*, 1724–1726, prefixed to the *Mém. de Villette*.

Digitized by Google

ment of 1727, they gave the signal for hostilities against the English; seized the rich, privileged ship of the South-Sea Company; sequestrated the freight belonging to English, French, and Dutch traders in Spanish vessels; and entered upon the siege of Gibraltar: a most useless siege; for the Spaniards could neither carry the place by main force, nor prevent the English from revictualling it by sea.

Spain had not the power to compel a general war. Austria did not follow her. The Emperor had been unable to draw the Germanic diet into the Vienna alliance; he felt that he was not in a condition to defend Belgium against France and the maritime powers; he was not less vulnerable on the Upper Rhine and in Italy; lastly, he lacked money; and the subsidies of Spain were far from being sufficient for him: on the other hand, his wife and his German ministers did not desire the Spanish marriages, nor, consequently, war. When he saw that England did not yield the point debated between her and him (that is, the Ostend Company), and that the French army was at the disposal of England, he yielded. May 31, 1727, preliminaries were signed at Paris between the ambassador of Charles VI. and the allies of Hanover. Charles suspended the Ostend Company for seven years; a seven-years' truce was concluded; and the Emperor promised that Spain should raise the siege of Gibraltar. It was agreed that the merchant-vessels seized on both sides should be restored, and that treaties of commerce should be reëstablished on the same footing as before. A Congress was convened at Aix la Chapelle for the definitive treaty.

Whatever may have been the irritation of Philip V. and his wife, Spain, in her turn, yielded to necessity; and, as early as June 13, the ambassador of Philip V. at Vienna signed the preliminaries. The death of George I, meanwhile (June 22), revived for a moment the courage of Spain, who hoped that the Jacobite party would profit by this event to excite a crisis in England; but the transmission of the crown to the second King of the Hanoverian dynasty, George II., was effected without the least disturbance. The relations between Versailles and St. James were in no wise modified; and Fleuri even contributed, by his good offices with the new King, to cause Robert Walpole to be maintained at the head of affairs. The Madrid cabinet was forced to resign itself to the necessity of ratifying the preliminaries: it, nevertheless, long continued to dispute their execution, complaining, not without reason, that the English had begun, before any

Digitized by Google

declaration of war, as early as 1726, to blockade the galleons in American ports, and demanding indemnities for this act and for the English contraband trade. There were also several other points under discussion: an official reconciliation was nevertheless effected, in the month of August, 1727, between the two branches of the House of Bourbon. Louis XV. and Philip V. exchanged amicable letters; and the removal of Fleuriau de Morville, the minister of foreign affairs, who had participated in the sending back of the Infanta under *Monsieur le Duc*, was presented as a satisfaction to Philip and his wife. Morville involved in his disgrace his father, the keeper of the seals, Fleuriau d'Armenonville; and the seals were given, together with the ministry of foreign affairs, to the president Chauvelin, a parliamentarian, who had been until then a stranger to the diplomatic career, and who had only made himself known as yet by his complaisance to the court in the affairs of the Bull *Unigenitus;* but who, having once reached his goal, patiently and unceasingly employed all the faculties of a superior mind in endeavoring to inspire the aged Fleuri with an enlightened and national policy in all external questions. Chauvelin desired that the self-love and the interests of Spain should be conciliated; but little more could be done for her than to cause her complaints to be referred to the projected Congress. A dangerous crisis of Philip V., by terrifying Queen Elizabeth, induced her finally to permit the execution of the preliminaries to be peacefully regulated (March 5, 1728).[1]

The Congress that was to assemble at Aix la Chapelle was transferred to Soissons, through regard for the Cardinal de Fleuri, who had assumed in person the functions of first French plenipotentiary (June 14, 1728). Almost all the European States sent representatives to Soissons. The high rank and numbers of the plenipotentiaries did not render the Congress more fruitful. The Queen of Spain had relapsed into her former course as soon as her husband was out of danger. The cabinet of Madrid still demanded the restitution of Gibraltar, — which, it proved, had been promised it by the late King, George I., — and, meanwhile, made no haste to keep its promise concerning the reëstablishment of commerce, and the restitution of the immense property belonging to foreign merchants on the fleets of Mexico and Peru. Nothing was decided in the Congress: the true negotiation was not at Soissons, but now at Versailles, now at Madrid. Several

[1] Dumont, t. VII. part ii. pp. 146–150.

Digitized by Google

times, the rupture between France and England seemed imminent. Fleuri constantly appeased them. Meanwhile, the respective disposition of the powers changed by degrees. The party which supported the Spanish alliance in the council of the Emperor still had credit enough to cause a secret proposition to be addressed to Fleuri, to marry the eldest of the arch-duchesses, Maria Theresa, to the Infant, Don Carlos, on condition that France would guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VI. Fleuri hesitated, for fear of a rupture with England: he was, moreover, very doubtful whether it was to the interest of France to encourage a marriage which might again unite the sceptres of the Empire and Spain in one hand.[1] The proposition was not renewed: the anti-Spanish party resumed the ascendency at Vienna; and Austria, while continuing to suck Spain like a leech, thought thenceforth only of deceiving her as long as possible. Not only was the idea of the Spanish marriages abandoned, but the cabinet of Vienna strove to lessen as far as possible the concession of Parma and Tuscany by putting itself in a position to lay claim to a multitude of pretended Imperial fiefs in these duchies, and insinuated to the confederates of Hanover that it would abandon Spain, if they would guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction; to which France was very averse.

The Spanish minister, Patiño, strove, not without success, to enlighten Queen Elizabeth concerning the bad faith of her allies, and induced her to demand the admission of Spanish garrisons into the places of the territory of Parma, instead of the neutral garrisons agreed upon by the treaty of 1721. French and English diplomacy seized the moment, and offered to secure to Spain what she claimed in Italy, in consideration of the faithful and complete execution of the agreement of March, 1728. Elizabeth demanded of the Emperor categorical explanations concerning his intentions: she received only an evasive answer. She then turned again to France, and attempted to obtain its support to the plan of a definitive treaty, which would refer to the decision of neutral powers the commercial questions, and the question relative to Gibraltar and Minorca. Chauvelin won for a moment the assent of Fleuri; but Horace Walpole quickly regained possession of the feeble old man. Meanwhile, the birth of a dauphin of France (September 4, 1729) dispelled the vague hopes which Philip

[1] Which would have happened; for Don Carlos became King of Spain, in 1759, by the death of his half-brother, Ferdinand. — See, concerning this incident, the *Mémoires de Villars*, pp. 421–431.

Digitized by Google

V. and his wife had always preserved concerning the crown of Louis XIV. Elizabeth clung so much the more eagerly to her Italian aspirations; and, not succeeding in separating France and England, she accepted what these two allies had offered her together. In the month of November, 1729, these long intrigues ended in a treaty signed at Seville between France, England, and Holland on the one hand, and Spain on the other. Gibraltar was not called in question. The abolition of the clauses of the treaty of Vienna, contrary to anterior treaties of commerce; the reëstablishment of the state of affairs that existed before 1725, an article wholly to the advantage of the English; the introduction of six thousand Spaniards into the places of Parma and Tuscany; and the assent of Spain to the proceedings of the allies of Hanover relative to the abolition of the Ostend Company, — such were the principal clauses of the compact that ruptured the fragile alliance of Spain and Austria.[1]

The Emperor broke forth into complaints and reproaches, as if he had acted with all the integrity imaginable. He strove to arm the Empire in behalf of his cause, and invoked the promises of Russia and Prussia; but the Germanic diet did not enter into the quarrel, and Russia had just experienced a change of reign: Catharine had died (May 16, 1727), and had been succeeded by the child whom she had set aside from the throne, the grandson of Peter the Great, Peter II. Russia did not stir; and the King of Prussia, a very military, but very unwarlike monarch, took care not to compromise himself. Charles VI., abandoned to his own forces, put a good face on the matter, and assembled numerous troops in Milanais to oppose the entrance of the Spaniards into Central Italy. Spain demanded assistance from her new allies, and war, at the end of which she saw the recovery of the Two Sicilies. They negotiated instead of acting. Fleuri did not desire war with any one. England did not desire it with Austria. Once more put in possession of the commercial privileges secured to her by her treaties with Spain, she now aimed at becoming reconciled with the Emperor, who, on his side, made her secret advances, and offered to submit to all the conditions of Seville, if England would guarantee his Pragmatic Sanction. Accessory questions concerning the interests of George II. as the Elector of Hanover protracted the negotiation. Charles VI. had also addressed analogous advances to France, and appeared disposed to

[1] Dumont, t. VII. part ii. p. 158.

Digitized by Google

make territorial concessions in the Netherlands in order to gain for his beloved Pragmatic Sanction the guarantee of Louis XV. Fleuri, as usual, was not sagacious enough to decide in time: the fear of offending his jealous allies, the English, paralyzed all initiative in him. The whole of the year 1730 was passed in this manner. January 10, 1731, the Duke of Parma, Antonio Farnese, died without children: the agents of the Emperor, to gain time, persuaded his widow to declare herself pregnant; and the Imperial troops provisionally occupied the territory of Parma.

Spain lost patience: she had already signified that the abandonment of her allies released her from the compact of Seville; and she dishonorably retained the property belonging to foreign merchants on the fleet and the galleons of 1730. Forty-five millions of this belonged to French commerce. The ship-owners of Cadiz were little more than the commissioners of the foreign merchants who could not trade directly with the Spanish Indies. The English cabinet was afraid of again losing the commercial privileges recovered with so much difficulty, and commissioned its ambassador at Vienna to conclude negotiations with the Emperor without more delay. At this moment, secret parleys had been resumed between Austria and France; and the Emperor appeared on the point of promising the cession of Luxemburg. He preferred to cede none of his territory, and to treat with England; meanwhile postponing the solution of whatever regarded the Hanoverian interests. March 16, 1731, a new compact was therefore signed at Vienna: the Emperor promised to abolish the Ostend Company, thus sacrificing the natural rights of Belgium to the tyrannical selfishness of the maritime powers,[1] and promised no longer to oppose the entrance of the Spaniards into Tuscany and Parma. England guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, but with the secret proviso that the inheriting arch-duchess should neither espouse a Bourbon, nor any other prince sufficiently powerful to destroy the balance of power in Europe.

Spain, although she obtained by the second treaty of Vi-

[1] The affair of the Danish East-India Company was another very characteristic instance of this tyranny. The King of Denmark, in 1728, having renewed the privileges of this company, the principal station of which was at Tranquebar, on the coast of Coromandel, and having granted it a free entrepôt at Altona in Holstein, on the Elbe, with other privileges designed to attract to it foreign capital, England and Holland did not content themselves with forbidding their subjects to become interested in this association, but addressed threatening remonstrances to Denmark as if it had encroached on their rights, and succeeded in stifling the growth of the Danish Company. — *Journal de Louis XV.*

Digitized by Google

enna the realization of what had been promised her at Seville, would have preferred war, had she been supported by France: but Fleuri, although trifled with very discourteously by his friends, the Walpoles, did not, therefore, become more warlike; and Spain could do nothing better than to accede to the Austro-Britannic compact, which Holland also ratified (June 6–July 22, 1731). It must have been very hard for the court of Spain to renew its guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction, now that there was no longer behind this guarantee the brilliant perspective of the double marriage. It is true that Elizabeth Farnese, in suffering Philip V. to pledge his word, reserved to herself the right of not permitting him to keep it.

The dowager duchess of Parma put an end, when it suited the Austrians, to the farce of pregnancy that she had played for some months; and in November, 1731, an English squadron at last landed at Leghorn six thousand Spaniards, who occupied Leghorn, Porto Ferrajo, Parma, and Plaisance, in the name of the young Don Carlos, as Duke of Parma, and presumptive heir of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, John Gaston de Medici. Thus was realized, after thirteen years of wearisome intrigue, the strange agreement which had disposed of two Italian States without consulting either their princes or their people,[1] and which rendered still heavier the yoke, already so weighty, of foreign dominion in Italy.

From 1731 to 1732, the immediate risk of war seemed, therefore, averted throughout Europe. The question of the Pragmatic Sanction still loomed up as a cloud on the horizon, the French government and a part of the German princes continuing to refuse to guarantee the law of the Austrian succession; but the Emperor was only forty-six, and it seemed probable that it would be long before the succession would open.[2]

Another kind of peace was still more difficult to obtain than the peace of the sovereigns, — the peace of the theologians. The efforts of Fleuri were here less successful. It is true that he himself interfered in their discussions too much as a party instead of an arbiter.

[1] The Grand Duke of Tuscany did not assent to the agreements of Vienna till September 21, 1731.

[2] Concerning all this diplomatic period, see *Mém. de Villars*, 1726–1731; *Mém. de l'Abbé de Montgon*; W. Coxe, *Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. III. pp. 183–297; Id., *Hist. de la Maison d'Autriche*, ch. lxxxvii. lxxxviii. Coxe has searched all the correspondence of the two Walpoles and their agents. — Flassan, t. V. pp. 28–62, 2d edition, 1811.

Digitized by Google

The unhappy Protestants had gained something at least by the overthrow of *Monsieur le Duc*. If, on the one hand, the government rigorously watched over the frontiers in order to arrest the new emigration, on the other the council secretly forbade the intendants all proceedings against backsliders, and enjoined that the article of the edict of 1724, which authorized the curés to visit, whether desired or not, and without witnesses, the sick suspected of heresy, — an article which had occasioned not only odious scenes of fanaticism, but grave abuses as to morality, and scandalous accusations of Protestant women against Catholic priests, — should be suffered to fall into disuse. This was tacitly suspending the most frequent application of the edict of 1724. The author of this tyrannical law, the vile Archbishop of Rouen, disregarding the orders given to the intendants, urged Fleuri to reanimate the zeal of these functionaries; but the aged minister turned a deaf ear to him. Tressan was not a cardinal: he consoled himself by the punishment of a pastor, and the imprisonment of a great number of Protestant women, who had been surprised at meetings in the wilderness, and thrown into the tower of Constance, at Aigues Mortes (1727–1729). The persecution, while momentarily ceasing to invade the domestic fireside, continued to fall on all external acts of devotion.[1]

If the fate of the Huguenots was, relatively, somewhat mitigated after the accession of Fleuri, the *lettres de cachet*, the banishments, were multiplied, on the contrary, in an exorbitant ratio, against the Jansenist and Gallican ecclesiastics who obstinately maintained their appeal to the council; but, at the same time, Fleuri strove to regain, by all sorts of advances and private influences, the leader of the religious opposition, the Cardinal de Noailles. The enfeebled faculties of this estimable old man gave reason to hope that his resistance might be overcome. The last days of the old friend of Bossuet were cruelly tormented. His family, all Molinists, and his diocesan clergy, all Jansenists or *anti-constitutionnaires*, did not leave him a moment's repose. In the month of July, 1727, a bull from the Pope in favor of the opinions of St. Thomas, a bull very displeasing to the Molinists, seemed destined to facilitate the reconciliation of Noailles with the Holy See; but a new storm broke out in the Church of France in the interim. The Bishop of Senez, Jean Soanen, an old pillar of Jansenism and prelate of ascetic virtue, had just published

[1] Lémontei, t. II. pp. 157–159; Coquerel, *Hist. des Églises du Désert*, t. I. chap. vi.

Digitized by Google

a pastoral letter of instructions, in which he reproduced propositions more or less analogous to those which had been condemned by the Bull *Unigenitus*. The archiepiscopal see of Embrun, the metropolis which had jurisdiction over Senez, was at that time filled by a personage even more scandalous than the Archbishop of Rouen, Tressan; namely, Guérin de Tencin, the former agent of Dubois at Rome, suspected of incest with his sister,[1] and convicted of perjury and simony at the bar of the parliament; a fact known to all Paris, which had not hindered him from being raised to the highest dignities of the Gallican Church! This intriguer, the equal of Dubois in vice, but not in talent, had nothing more to wish for but the Roman purple. More able than Tressan, he comprehended that the persecution of the Jansenists was a better claim to favor at Rome than the persecution of the Protestants. He gained such influence over Fleuri, that, despite the aversion of the latter to noise and scandal, he obtained permission to convoke a provincial council at Embrun to pronounce judgment on the *letter of instructions* of the Bishop of Senez. The simoniac procured the condemnation of the saint (August, 1727). The aged prelate, having refused to retract, was suspended from his functions by the council, and banished by the King to the recesses of the mountains of Auvergne. This was the last provincial council held under the monarchy.

The Bishop of Senez lodged an appeal, with respect to the spiritual power, to the Pope and the future council, and appealed, with respect to the temporal power, from the ecclesiastical court, as exceeding its jurisdiction, to the parliament of Paris, which received the appeal. Fifty advocates of the parliament, the most renowned of their order, published an opinion in favor of the condemned and despoiled prelate: twelve bishops, the Cardinal de Noailles at their head, addressed to the King a protest against the Council of Embrun (March 13, 1728). The noise was echoed far and wide. The Molinistic majority of the episcopate agitated violently in a contrary direction, sustained by the government, which issued a Draconian ordinance against whomsoever should print, without permission, works contrary to the bulls received in the kingdom, the respect due to the Holy Father, the bishops, and the authority of the King. The printer was to be pilloried for the first offence, and condemned to the galleys in case of its repeti-

[1] The celebrated canoness, Alexandrine de Tencin, the mistress of the Regent, Dubois, and many others, and the mother of D'Alembert.

Digitized by Google

tion.[1] The Duke de Noailles, and the wife of the Marshal de Gramont, the nephew and niece of the cardinal, and the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, long accustomed to sacrifice his personal inclinations to the *external* peace of the Church and the State, aided Fleuri and Chauvelin in circumventing the old man. He was made to sign a retraction of his opposition to the Council of Embrun; but he no longer had either memory, or will, or real responsibility for his actions. The Jansenists, in their turn, made him retract his retraction: then he suffered the Molinists to draw from him the signature of a mandate by which he purely and simply accepted the Bull (October 11, 1728). Such a victory had not much moral value. Almost all the curés refused to read this mandate from the pulpit; and it was not dared to constrain them, for fear of an insurrection. Noailles retracted his mandate, moreover, by new protests (December, 1728–February, 1729). Death at length snatched from this painful position a man who had survived himself, and who retained enough self-consciousness to comprehend it (May 4, 1729). He had never shone through great force of character or genius; but his evangelical virtues and his excellent intentions had merited the respect of France. It was the crumbling of a last relic of the seventeenth century.[2]

The strife continued over the tomb of Noailles. The court of Rome had obtained by intimidation, and despite many individual protests, the retraction of the principal *appellant* religious orders; but the lower secular clergy, less dependent, stood firm, supported by public opinion. At Paris, the bourgeoisie and the artisans sustained Jansenism in an immense majority, not through attachment to *efficacious grace* or to *gratuitous predestination*, but through hatred of the Jesuits and contempt of the *constitutionnaire* bishops. A new enterprise of the court of Rome gave the Jansenists a powerful auxiliary. Benedict XIII. having rendered general in Catholicism the office of *St. Hildebrand* (Gregory VIII.), a saint beatified at Rome at the time of the League, but recognized neither in France nor in Germany, the parliament of Paris set aside the *legend* of this fierce apostle of papal omnipotence (July, 1729). The parliaments of Brittany, Metz, and Bordeaux, rendered similar decrees: the *anti-constitutionnaire* bishops prohibited by mandates the office of the pretended saint. The Pope launched briefs against the decrees of the parliaments and

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 312, May 10, 1728.
[2] *Journal de Dorsanne*, t. V. *passim*.

Digitized by Google

the mandates of the opposing bishops: the parliament of Paris prescribed the annulment of the briefs (September, 1729–February, 1730).

Fleuri had felt that it was morally impossible to check the parliament in such a juncture; but he offered great compensations to Rome. In November, 1729, a *lettre de cachet* excluded from the Faculty of Theology forty-eight doctors who had renewed their appeal to the council since 1720: the Sorbonne, thus mutilated, was then made to vote anew on the pure and simple reception of the Constitution, which passed, despite the protest of the forty-eight and of a number of their fellow-members. Many vicars and priests attached to parishes were recalled, and even exiled. A large number retired to Utrecht, which had become, within the past few years, the Geneva of Jansenism, tolerated by the government of the United Provinces. The Jansenists had there an archbishop, elected by the metropolitan chapter, according to the tradition of the Church of Utrecht, but to whom the Pope had refused the *pallium*, and who found himself schismatic despite himself. This state of affairs has been prolonged from generation to generation to our day; each bishop elected soliciting communion from the Pope, who invariably refuses it.

April 3, 1730, the King went to the parliament to carry to a bed of justice a declaration prescribing the execution of the Bull *Unigenitus*, and of all the anterior bulls against Jansenism. Not a cry of *Long live the King!* was raised as Louis XV. passed. The attitude of the parliament was very firm: several magistrates declared that they should consider that they were themselves betraying the King in receiving a bull that stigmatized those whom the fear of an unjust excommunication did not prevent from doing their duty (Art. 91 of the Bull). More than two-thirds of the parliament voted openly in the negative. The registration was none the less imposed on it; but the parliament, the very next morning, set about deliberating and protesting anew, despite the explicit orders of the King. Upon new injunctions, however, it discontinued its meetings. In the course of these debates, the Great Chamber, although composed of the oldest and least impetuous magistrates, struck out the preamble of a *resolution*, because the attorney-general had said therein that "the King was employing all his efforts to reëstablish peace in his kingdom." This indirect blame addressed to the King in person was a grave and new symptom.

Hostilities were violently rekindled, some months after, between

Digitized by Google

the parliament and the *constitutionnaire* bishops on account of an opinion of the advocates in favor of ecclesiastics oppressed by their superiors. The parliament set aside a mandate of Tencin, very arrogant towards the magistracy; then a mandate of La Fare, the bishop of Laon, a worthy acolyte of Tencin, who had been guilty of absolute swindling in his youth, and *who would not have been a fit subject for a musketeer*, to use the expression of a contemporary.[1] The new Archbishop of Paris himself, M. de Vintimille, a Molinist prelate, but who had the reputation of being more expert in gastronomy than theology, was summoned before the parliament on account of another mandate, in which he enunciated maxims attacking the rights of the temporal power. The court took alarm; and, March 10, 1731, a decree of the council imposed silence on every one concerning questions relative to the limits of the temporal and the spiritual powers. July 22, a royal circular exhorted the bishops not to entitle the Bull a *rule of faith*, but only the *judgment of the Church*, and not to interrogate laymen on this subject (at the point of death or otherwise). This impartial course should have been maintained; but the council was the first to derogate from its own law of silence by yielding to the importunities of the Molinists, and authorizing the Archbishop of Paris to issue the mandate, the subject of the quarrel (August, 1731). This occasioned a great tumult: the advocates, tacitly excommunicated by the mandate on account of their attack on the episcopal jurisdiction, ceased to plead in the last resort. September 7, the parliament proclaimed, under the form of a decree, all the Gallican maxims concerning the independence of the temporal power. The council annulled the decree the same day, under the pretext that it transgressed the orders of the King; and another decree of the council declared that the Constitution should be executed "as the judgment of the universal Church." The parliament did not yield, and, November 30, it repaired in a body to Marly to present its remonstrances orally to the King, who refused to receive it. On its return to Paris, it maintained, in respectful terms, its decree of September 7. The royal council sought to separate the advocates from the parliament by making them a sort of reparation through a decree very honorable to their body; a circumstance that attests the growing influence of this class, destined to so active a part in the future revolutions (December 1).[2] The leaders of the parliament, on the

[1] Journal of the advocate Barbier, t. I. p. 339.

[2] From this epoch dates that lofty qualification, — *the Order of Advocates*, a reminiscence of Roman municipal traditions. — See *Voltaire, Hist. du Parlement de Paris*, ch. lxiv.

Digitized by Google

contrary, were twice summoned to court, and severely reprimanded: the King ordered their written remonstrances to be torn to pieces before their eyes. The Abbé Pucelle, the Ex-Secretary of the Council of Conscience under Noailles, was exiled with another counsellor. The parliament suspended the course of justice, and received an appeal from the ecclesiastical court, as having exceeded its jurisdiction, against the mandate of the archbishop, despite the express orders of the King (June 13, 1732). Four magistrates were again exiled; and a decree of the council annulled the decree of June 13. The seven Chambers of Inquiries and Requests resigned in a body.

The parliament was much bolder, and the government much weaker, than in the times of the Regent, although there was a king *governing by himself;* a king who brought to the beds of justice, and to all the solemn acts of his authority, only a haughty ennui and a puerile impatience. Fleuri sought a compromise. The first president, Portail, devoted to the court, consented to ask a pardon, which his companions had not commissioned him to solicit. The King granted *forgiveness*, and sent back the resignations. The members who had resigned returned; but, instead of resuming the course of justice, they employed themselves in drawing up remonstrances. August 18, 1732, a new royal declaration, which almost entirely took away from the parliament the right of receiving appeals from the ecclesiastical court as having exceeded its jurisdiction (*appels comme d'abus*), interdicted the assembling of the Courts of Inquiries and Requests, enjoined the resumption of its duties, under penalty of deprivation of office, etc. The parliament neither resumed its duties nor registered the declaration. September 2, it was summoned to Versailles for a bed of justice, the first that had been held outside of Paris. The King prescribed the registration of the declaration of August 18. The parliament refrained from voting, and, September 4, affirmed, by a decree, that it was *impossible* for it to execute the declaration. On the 7th, three-fourths of the members of the Chambers of Inquiries and Requests were exiled by *lettres de cachet*, which dispersed them through France.

This was a great stroke; but it was not sustained. Although the aged magistrates of the Great Chamber had not openly made common cause with their colleagues of the Courts of Inquiries and Requests, the government recoiled: the letters of exile were revoked from December 1, 1732; and the King granted the *suspension*, that is, the annulment, in point of fact, of the declaration of

Digitized by Google

August 18. It was therefore as a conqueror that the parliament resumed the course of justice. The royal authority had been doubly humiliated in this struggle: it had suffered itself to be defeated in sustaining, against its own interests, the interests of Rome and of the episcopate.[1]

During the parliamentary strife, events of a very different nature, the work of Jansenist enthusiasm, had raised this enthusiasm to madness, and struck all France with astonishment. In the closing years of the seventeenth and the first of the eighteenth centuries, the Cévennese solitudes had witnessed the reappearance of those extraordinary phenomena which history shows us as signalizing all religious crises. Now analogous prodigies broke forth and multiplied in the midst of Paris, under the eyes of the most scoffing, the most frivolous, the least enthusiastic, and the least religious generation that France had yet produced; and this generation was for a moment fascinated thereby. The moral situation of the persecuted Jansenists logically brought about these prodigies: they, who believed themselves the sole heirs of the primitive Church, the sole depositaries of the doctrine of the Apostles and the Fathers, of St. Paul and St. Augustine, saw themselves hunted down, exiled, interdicted the sacred ministry, excluded from the last sacraments by the enemies of the dogma of grace, which was to them the sum of religion. They saw with their own eyes the fall, the *defection*, of the Church, which the Gallican as well as the Ultramontane theologians had so many times declared impossible. Scarcely a few scattered champions of *the truth* remained in the episcopate. The visible Church thus fallen, how could the Christian faith be saved, and the promises of Christ accomplished, if not by the direct and supernatural intervention of the Divinity? The expectation of miracles capable of confounding the enemies of grace was very natural among men who believed, like the mass of the Christians, moreover, that the Creator sometimes deranges for special causes the general laws that he has given to Nature.

When prodigies are expected, they always come. The Jansenists had already had formerly, during the palmy days of Port Royal, the famous miracle of the *Holy Thorn*. In the years just preceding the death of the Cardinal de Noailles, several miraculous facts began to be pointed out to public attention, con-

[1] Concerning the whole parliamentary quarrel, see the *Journal* of the advocate Barbier, t. I. pp. 299–324, *et seq.*; *Journal de Louis XV.* 1732–1739; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI., same dates.

Digitized by Google

sisting of sudden cures of inveterate diseases. The most prominent of these cures was that of a woman healed of a paralysis and a bloody flux by prostrating herself before the Blessed Sacrament in a Jansenist parish procession in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Among the witnesses who signed the official report of this event is found the name of AROUET DE VOLTAIRE.[1]

Meanwhile, there chanced to die in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau a churchman belonging to a parliamentary family by the name of Pâris, an ascetic and ecstatic devotee, very charitable, and strongly opposed to the Bull, who, through humility, had been unwilling to rise above the deaconship, and who had caused his own death, at the age of thirty-seven, by dint of macerations (May 1, 1727). He passed for a saint in his quarter. The poor and infirm whom he had nourished gathered together to make novenas about his tomb, in the Cemetery of Saint-Médard. Ere long the rumor spread of some miraculous cures. The Jansenists flocked thither from the whole city. Electric thrills ran through these crowds animated by a like emotion; the agitation redoubled; the women burst into sobs and cries; the most excited were seized with nervous attacks and convulsive spasms; a few fell into trances; the sick and impotent, transported with an ardent faith, caused themselves to be stretched on the blessed tomb; unfortunates tortured by nervous crises found there an unhoped-for calm; paralytics and cripples, on the contrary, after violent convulsions, rose and walked; it was even pretended that affections of quite a different nature, and wholly foreign to the nervous system, — cancers and ulcers, — disappeared suddenly, which would be absolutely inexplicable. It is certain, and the fact had a prodigious effect, that a woman in good health, who took a fancy through derision to stretch herself on the tomb of the holy man, feigning to be paralytic, was suddenly seized with such horror of her *sacrilege*, that a real attack of paralysis supervened. A great part of Paris believed, without reservation, in the supernatural power of the Deacon Pâris: another part, at least as large, astonished and curious, mingled with the Jansenists, through the spirit of opposition, to see miracles performed in spite of the police. The facts were multiplied to such a degree, not only in Paris, but

[1] May 31, 1725. — It is vexatious that Voltaire should not have explained what he thought of the nature of the occurrence; for if he did not believe in a *miracle*, and scoffs at it, he none the less appears not to have suspected the woman La Fosse of imposture. — See his letter of August 20, 1725, to Madame de Bernières, in his *Correspondance générale*, t. I.; see also the *Journal* of the advocate Barbier, t. I. p. 219.

Digitized by Google

at different points of France where the blessed Pâris was invoked, and a large number of these facts seemed so well attested, that the *constitutionnaires*, driven to despair, took the course of attributing these phenomena to the Devil. This was done by the Archbishop of Paris, in his mandate of July 15, 1731; then by Pope Clement XII.,[1] in his brief of August 22, of the same year, against *false miracles*.

For nearly four years these strange spectacles had been renewed, with intervals of quiet, followed by increased agitation, when the government, after having molested and individually prosecuted a few of the actors, caused the Cemetery of Saint-Médard to be closed by order of the King[2] (January 27, 1732). The royal power did not, like the ecclesiastical power, accuse the *convulsionists* of being instruments of Satan: it accused them of being impostors, according to the report "of a great number of physicians and surgeons" commissioned to examine them. The public set no value on reports evidently dictated by the authorities; and the Jansenist effervescence only changed its scene of action. The convulsions took place with closed doors, in private houses; and the miracles were transported from place to place, harassed and hunted down by the police. All the efforts both of the ecclesiastical and secular powers would have failed to subdue this pious rebellion, had it not found its decline in its own excesses. The nocturnal and mysterious meetings of the sect assumed a more and more fanatical character. The scenes presented there became at once indecent and cruel. The most common trait among the women, who played the principal part therein, was an extremely singular combination of hysterical excitement, and that momentary insensibility which magnetizers sometimes succeed in producing in somnambulists, but which, in the convulsionists, was manifested spontaneously. In the violence of their spasms, the convulsionists shrieked for *succors*, for *consolations*. These *succors* consisted in trampling upon their bodies, and striking them violently. Four or five men stood with their whole weight on a young girl stretched on the ground, or struck her with billets of wood, without her expressing the least suffering. Some caused themselves to be crucified, in imitation of the Passion, without appearing to feel the nails that pierced their hands and feet! To these unheard-of follies were joined the ancient follies of the Protestant sectarians revived,—the apocalyptic predictions,

[1] Corsini. He had succeeded Benedict XIII. in 1730.

[2] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXI. p. 369.

Digitized by Google

the number 666, the figure of the name of the Beast discovered in the name of *Louis Quinze*,[1] the appearance of a pretended prophet, Elias, etc.

It was too much, not only for the public, but for the enlightened portion of Jansenism. The tradition of Arnauld and Nicole and of the Cartesians of Port Royal was incompatible with this orgie-like frenzy. The serious theologians of the party loudly protested against it; the parliament denounced the sectarians: the reasoners separated from the fanatics, and sought to distinguish between the doctrine and its compromising disciples, between miracles and miracles. The public did not stop at these distinctions: the reaction once commenced in public opinion, nothing was seen but imperfect cures, relapses of those pretended to have been healed miraculously, deaths caused by the convulsions, scandals and knavery mixed with the fanaticism. After believing in impossibilities, men even denied the truth: every thing was swallowed up in ridicule, and nought remained in the mind of Paris and of France but the shame of having been duped.[2]

The humiliation of the Jansenists was not destined to turn to the advantage of the Jesuits, but of a third party that was growing in full view, and everywhere extending its conquests. The conclusion that was drawn from all this religious strife by an immense portion of the public, we shall seek, not in the celebrated writers, the heads of schools, but in an obscure chronicler, who registered, month by month, without dreaming of publicity, the news of the parliament and the city, — a mind of average scope, and of opinions by no means bold on any other subject, the faithful expression of the *reasoning* bourgeoisie. "The more we search into these matters, whether of the prophecies or of the ancient miracles received by the Church, the more we see the obscurity of the one and the uncertainty of the others, which were established in those remote times with as little foundation as that which is taking place to-day before our eyes. . . . If this happens

[1] By way of compensation, the Molinists found it in the name of *Father Quesnel*. See a curious MS. note prefixed to t. III. of a collection of documents in quarto, concerning the miracles of the Deacon Pâris, belonging to the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal; 4974, T.

[2] See *Recueil des miracles opérés par l'intercession du diacre Pâris*, three vols. in 12mo. The Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal possesses another collection of very curious documents collected into three quarto volumes by M. de Paulmi; see also *La Vérité sur les miracles*, etc., by Carré de Montgeron; and the celebrated Jansenist journal, *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, 1728, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

in our days, in a refined, irreligious, and licentious age, we need no longer be surprised in what manner, in all times, the different systems of religion have gained favor. Politics interfere with them, and the establishment is insensibly effected. . . . By what we see (concerning the manner in which the Bull *Unigenitus* has been received), we can judge healthfully of the internal respect that we should have for all the great points decided by the universal Church."[1]

This quotation, which reveals so grave a moral situation, suffices for the moment: we shall, ere long, examine more closely and more at length into the state of ideas in France, and shall witness the formation of the great philosophic and infidel party.

The compromise concluded between the ministry and the parliament at the close of 1732 did not put an end to the hostilities kept up by the question of the miracles. The parliament continued to set aside the mandates of the ultramontane bishops; the council of the King, to set aside the Jansenist mandates, and to invoke the *law of silence*, infringed upon every moment by both factions: but this no longer attracted the attention of the public, to which external events offered a more lively interest. After twenty years of peace, scarcely interrupted, in 1719, by an expedition without peril or glory, France had again taken up arms under the pacific Fleuri.

SECTION III. — THE CARDINAL DE FLEURI (*continued*).

After the compromises of 1731, the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VI. remained the great affair of Europe; Austrian diplomacy laboring to obtain, French diplomacy to prevent, the guarantee of Germany. The Emperor succeeded. January 11, 1732, the diet of Ratisbon accepted and became security for the law of the Austrian succession; but the success was incomplete, the electors of Saxony and Bavaria and the Palatine having formally protested against it. Denmark shortly after acceded to the Pragmatic Sanction; and a treaty of alliance and guarantee was concluded by this crown with Austria and Russia (May 26, 1732). The King of Denmark gave to the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, the son-in-law of Peter the Great, a pecuniary indemnity for the part of Schleswig that he had formerly possessed; and Russia ratified the acquisition of Schleswig by the Danish monarch. Russia al-

[1] *Journal* of the advocate Barbier, t. II. pp. 54, 70, 232.

Digitized by Google

ready had no longer for a sovereign the grandson of Peter the Great. Peter II. had died at fifteen, January 30, 1730; and an intrigue of the principal boyars had replaced him, not by the elder of his aunts, the two daughters of Peter the Great, but by the second daughter of the brother of Peter, the dowager-duchess of Courland, Anne Ivanovna.

Meanwhile, Spain persisted in her turbulent policy: unable to have war in Italy, she had waged it in Africa, where she had recovered the ancient conquest of Ximenes, Oran, which the Moors had wrested from her in 1708, during the misfortunes of the War of the Succession (July, 1732). The famous saying of Alberoni has been taken too literally: "Spain is a corpse which I galvanized, but which, at my departure, fell back into its grave."[1] The vivifying impulse given by Alberoni was never to be completely arrested, and Spain was never more to become what it had been under the last Austrian kings. The Spanish cabinet, exalted by its African victories, made new efforts to draw France into an offensive alliance against the Emperor. War was far from Fleuri's thoughts; but Chauvelin and the Marshal de Villars, members of the council since the death of the Regent, urged the aged minister to negotiations designed at least to provide for the event of war. For instance, the King of Sardinia, who had hitherto held aloof from the Franco-Spanish combinations through too just distrust of the extravagant pretensions of Queen Elizabeth, now negotiated with France, and offered her Savoy, provided that France secured the annexation of Milanais to Piedmont.[2]

They might have long continued to manœuvre in this wise in the labyrinths of diplomacy, had not an event wholly foreign to the Austrian Pragmatic Sanction caused a crisis in affairs. Another succession than that of Charles VI. was the first to become vacant; a succession not less litigated, and which had many times awakened the forethought of politicians. Augustus II.,

[1] Letter of Cardinal de Polignac, October 30, 1724, in Lémontei, t. II. p. 118. A very singular circumstance signalized this descent of the Spaniards in Africa: the Mussulman general who disputed Oran to them with courage, if not with success, was no other than the ex-prime minister of Spain, the Hollander Ripperda, become, from Protestant, Catholic, and from Catholic, disciple of Mahomet, and vizier of the Emperor of Morocco. This strange adventurer died in 1737, at the moment when he was thinking of founding in Morocco a new Messiahship, according to which Moses, Jesus Christ, and Mahomet would have been only the precursors of the true Messiah. About the same time, another renegade, less mystical, the Frenchman Bonneval, figured as largely at Constantinople as Ripperda at Morocco.

[2] *Mém. de Villars*, pp. 419–427.

Digitized by Google

Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, died February 1, 1733. Who was to be his successor? The definitive entrance of Russia into European combinations gave this question an importance which the Polish elections had never before possessed in the same degree. France was free from any pledge, since Stanislaus Leczinski's renunciation of his rights had been the condition of the marriage of his daughter to Louis XV. What was France to do? She had lately refused a cordial understanding with Russia, and had thrown back this power into the Austrian alliance: she must therefore prepare to contend openly and energetically against Russia and Austria united, but according to what plan?

There were two lines of conduct between which to choose.

It was evident that the ancient national Polish party had not been reconciled to foreign royalties by the violent, crafty, and corrupt government of Augustus of Saxony; that this party was about to turn to the father-in-law of Louis XV., to the Ex-King expelled by foreigners, and not by Poland; and that in opposition to Stanislaus, the son of the late King Augustus, the new elector of Saxony, Augustus III., would set himself up as a candidate, supported by thirty-three thousand Saxon soldiers, and twelve millions of ready money bequeathed him by his father. It seemed most natural at first sight that France should support the exclusive Polish nationality and the father-in-law of Louis XV.; but the difficulties in the way of this were prodigious. The Cardinal de Fleuri, on bad terms with the daughter of Stanislaus, who had the fault in his sight of being the creature of *Monsieur le Duc* and Madame de Prie, had made no preparation for this contingency. Austria and Russia, on the contrary, had agreed in advance to exclude Stanislaus and the influence of France: their treaty of 1732 with Denmark stipulated, it is said, by a secret clause, that they would oppose, in case of the death of Augustus II., the election of the son or the father-in-law of the King of France as King; and the King of Prussia had subscribed to this pledge. Should it, nevertheless, be resolved to support Stanislaus, it was necessary to act with the greatest celerity and vigor; to send Stanislaus at once to Dantzic, and to despatch a fleet with an imposing force as speedily as possible after him, in order to land as soon as the Saxons interfered in behalf of their prince; to threaten the Russian ports of the Baltic; to draw in Sweden; to regain Denmark, disaffected towards the Austro-Russian alliance; to strive to obtain Prussian neutrality; finally to conclude matters as quickly as possible with Spain and Sardinia in order to attack the

Digitized by Google

Emperor in Italy. There remained a formidable problem: Holland, whose political life was becoming weaker from day to day, would certainly remain neutral; but what would England do? Would she suffer France to revive her navy and to rule the Baltic? And, should she interfere against us, how put ourselves quickly enough in a condition to sustain the shock, in the state of dilapidation into which our fleets and arsenals had been suffered to fall?

There was a second course to take, less chivalrous, less simple of conception, but of a profounder policy. This would have been to change the instrument of the degradation of Poland into an instrument of independence and regeneration; to draw closer, instead of breaking, the bond between Poland and Saxony; to make the protégé of the Russians the protégé of France; and to cause Stanislaus to renounce the throne, and the Polish patriots to accept Augustus III., while guaranteeing the national liberties, and urging the modification of the laws that kept Poland in a state of anarchical powerlessness. This was a scheme that offered great advantages: it would no longer have been necessary to seize upon the Baltic, or expose France to maritime war against the English; the party opposed to the Pragmatic Sanction would have been maintained compact in Germany; and France would have had her communications open with Poland through the Palatinate, Bavaria, and Saxony, her allies; it would not even perhaps have been impossible to renew, at least for a time, the understanding broken off with Russia, to gain over to this combination the German adventurers that governed Russia in the name of the Czarina Anne, and to attain the isolation of Austria. Prussia would not probably have stirred.

Of the two courses that have just been set forth, the first was embraced with eagerness, both by the old generals of Louis XIV., who were weary of seeing their glory tarnish, and by the men of the young court, who aspired, in their turn, to win renown and military honors: all chose the simpler and more apparent. As to the second course, a single man in the administration was capable of conceiving and executing it; namely, Chauvelin, who entertained this thought. Certain indications of this are found in the writings of his friend, the heir to his policy, the patriotic Marquis d'Argenson; but all support was lacking. Those who desired war in the council and about the King would have cried out against sacrilege, had it been talked of sacrificing the father-in-law of Louis XV. to views too able for them; and as to Fleuri, nothing

Digitized by Google

in the world was more impossible than to make him adopt a sudden and decisive policy; although, at heart, the second course would have suited him much better than the first. A third would have suited him still better; namely, to do nothing at all. He could not adhere to this: the general outcry was too strong, and he dared not brave it. The same weakness that rendered Fleuri pacific, rendered him powerless to resist the advocates of war. It was not the King that forced him to action. Louis remained indifferent and inert during the hot debates of the council; not a ray of glory illumined his beautiful, cold face; not a youthful outburst escaped from his disdainful lips: the blood of Henri IV. and Louis XIV. seemed frozen in his veins.

The council of the King decided to support Stanislaus. A letter had been received by which the primate of Poland, the Regent of the kingdom during the interregnum, claimed the protection of the King of France in behalf of Polish independence. Immediately upon the news of the death of Augustus II., the Emperor and the Czarina had declared the formal intention to exclude Stanislaus, both taking as a pretext their right to guarantee the laws and liberties of Poland! The Emperor invoked the ancient treaties of reciprocal assistance which had fraternally united Poland to his kingdom of Hungary; and the Czarina appealed to the mediation of her uncle, Peter the Great, between Augustus II. and the confederated Polish malecontents, in 1717. Stanislaus had been excluded and banished by a law dictated by foreign powers; and foreign powers pretended to protect the constitution of Poland by maintaining this law: this was the beginning of that system of falsehood and hypocrisy by which Austria and Russia paved the way for and consummated the slaughter of the Polish nationality.

March 17, Louis XV., in answer to the hostile demonstrations of the Emperor, signified to the foreign ambassadors that he should maintain, as far as in him lay, the liberty of the Polish election, and that he should consider any undertaking contrary to this liberty as a violation of the peace of Europe. The Polish diet, encouraged by the declaration of the King of France, determined on the exclusion of all foreign candidates (April–May).[1]

Having spoken, it was necessary to act: Fleuri did not act, at

[1] Concerning all the affairs of Poland, see Rousset, *Recueil d'actes, négociations, etc., depuis la paix d'Utrecht*, t. IX. pp. 137–279 (April, 1733–February, 1734); t. XI. pp. 3–112 (1734–1735). This collection, published in Holland, forms a sequel to that of Lamberti. See also *Histoire de la dernière guerre, et des négociations pour la paix*, by P. Massuet, t. I., Amsterdam, 1737; and *Mém. de Villars*, p. 431, *et seq.*

Digitized by Google

least in Poland. Instead of despatching Stanislaus immediately to Dantzic, as the primate of Poland had urgently requested, directly after the death of Augustus II., Fleuri retained the royal candidate several months in France, and contented himself at first with sending three millions in ready money, and opening a credit with the French ambassador to Poland: then, when he finally decided to make maritime preparations, he embarked *fifteen hundred* soldiers at Brest on a small squadron, with a French nobleman who played the part of Stanislaus, while this prince traversed Germany and reached Warsaw in disguise (August–September). This was all that the cardinal-minister designed to do to redeem the promise given by the King of France to the Poles.

The enemies had better employed their time. Poland was already shut in between two Russian and Austrian armies. The Elector of Saxony had secured the support of the Emperor by accepting the Pragmatic Sanction, rejected by his father: he gained over Russia by promising the investiture of Courland to the Courlander, Bieren, the favorite of the Czarina; and rich *starosties* to the Germans, Münnich and Ostermann, her principal ministers (July, 1733). It was not, however, to the interest of Muscovy for Poland to have a King possessed of personal power; but the wretched character of Augustus III., his frivolity, and his incapacity, compensated but too well for the individual strength given him by the resources of Saxony. The Diet of Election, scarcely assembled, August 25, received news of the entrance of the Russians into Poland. Fifty thousand soldiers were marching on Warsaw. A number of the opposition quitted the diet: all the rest, sixty thousand noblemen,[1] voted for Stanislaus. A single noble pronounced the too famous *veto:* he retracted it, and Stanislaus was proclaimed September 12.

What followed showed how far Poland had fallen through the excess of the individual independence of the nobles, the subjugation of the peasants, and the absence of all organization of the national forces.[2] The Poles had not to deal with all the coalition formed against them: the Austrians, massed in Silesia, did not cross the frontier. The Emperor, seeing that Prussia and Denmark remained stationary, and beginning to fear that he had counted too much on the weakness of the French government, hoped to avoid war by abstaining from participating materially in the invasion of

[1] One of the manifestoes of Stanislaus' party says about a hundred thousand.
[2] We shall revert to the institutions of Poland, and the causes of its ruin.

Digitized by Google

Poland. The Russians and the Saxons were sufficient, with the coöperation of a feeble minority of factious Poles. The Polish nobility dispersed to defend their homes, ravaged by the Cossack and Calmuck bands that were burning castles and villages. The regular armies of Poland and Lithuania, very weak at all times, had been systematically disorganized by Augustus II., who confided in his Saxon troops alone; and were reduced to fifteen thousand men, undisciplined, and not inured to war. Only eight thousand men at arms could be assembled at Warsaw, who bravely defeated the crossing of the Vistula until the entire close of the electoral period. The factious Poles, who were quartered at Praga, on the other side of the river, were unable to make their way in time to the plain of Wola, near Warsaw, the place consecrated to the royal elections. On the eve of the day that the electoral period expired, they assembled in a forest on the right bank of the Vistula, and proclaimed Augustus of Saxony King (October 5, 1733). They numbered only three thousand nobles; but the whole Russian army was behind them. The Polish troops were at length compelled to evacuate Warsaw. King Stanislaus, immediately after his election, seeing himself without an army to keep the field, had departed with his principal adherents. There was not in the whole interior of Poland a single fortified town before which it was possible to arrest the enemy. Stanislaus could find a safe asylum nowhere except at Dantzic, a wealthy Hanseatic city, which was protected by, rather than subject to, the crown of Poland, and which, in its turn, protected its suzerain with courage and devotion. Stanislaus once established at Dantzic, nothing was lost, provided that he received in this port a French reenforcement capable of serving as a point of support to the Polish confederations that were being levied in every province against the foreigners.

The enemy fully comprehended this. After organizing the occupation of the principal towns, while Augustus III. caused himself to be crowned at Cracow, the Russians marched on Dantzic in the month of January, 1734. General Münnich, who directed all the affairs of war in Russia, hastened thither in person with all the troops that he could assemble. The forces of the besiegers, nevertheless, were not very considerable. The invaders had to occupy, with a hundred thousand men, as well Russian and Saxon as irregular hordes, an immense country, threaded in every direction by bands of the confederated nobility. Münnich had not, perhaps, thirty thousand men to employ in the vast circumvalla-

Digitized by Google

tion of Dantzic. He succeeded, after great efforts, in barring the Vistula, and cutting off the communications of the city with the sea and the fort that commanded the mouth of the river. The approaches were energetically disputed, and cost the enemy much bloodshed. The besieged, who had received from France, before the siege, artillery, money, and engineers, kept their eyes constantly fixed on the sea. A few French ships finally appeared in the roadstead about May 10, and landed three battalions at the mouth of the Vistula; then, on the 14th, reëmbarked this feeble detachment, and again set sail! The leaders of this farcical expedition had judged it impossible to attempt any thing. They brought back the squadron to Copenhagen; Denmark having remained neutral, despite her secret engagements with Austria and Russia.

The French embassy at Copenhagen was filled at that time by a Breton colonel, of brilliant wit, learning, and courage, — the Count de Plélo. In despair at the disgrace which he saw reflected on the French name throughout the North, he assembled at his house the leaders of the expedition, and reproached them for not having fought at any price. "It is easy to say this," exclaimed one of the officers, "in safety at one's fireside." — "What I have said, I will show you how to do," returned Plélo; and he summoned them to return with him to Dantzic. The commander of the land forces, the Count de La Peyrouse-Lamotte, a brave officer, who had greatly distinguished himself formerly in Spain against the English, could not withstand the challenge, and went over to the side of Plélo. They set out, like the devoted victims of ancient times, both convinced of the impossibility of conquering. Before embarking, Plélo wrote briefly to Chauvelin: "I am sure that I shall not return: I commend to you my wife and children."[1] May 24, La Peyrouse and Plélo landed, under the fort of Wechsel Munde (the mouth of the Vistula), with the fifteen hundred soldiers, reënforced by a few Frenchmen that Plélo had picked up at Copenhagen: on the 27th, they marched to the Russian lines, forced the barriers, and pushed forward, under a deadly fire, to join the besieged who had issued from the city. Success seemed ready to recompense their heroic daring, when Plélo fell, riddled with bullets. The passage was again closed, and the rallied masses of the enemy threatened to swallow up this handful of men. La Peyrouse brought back his little troop in good order, under the guns of Wechsel Munde, to his camp, where it was besieged by a part of

[1] Flassan, t. V. p. 71.

Digitized by Google

the Russian army. Had the expedition numbered five or six thousand men, instead of seventeen or eighteen hundred, the death of Plélo would not have prevented the success of the enterprise.

The city and the little French camp vied with each other in valor and constancy; but neither the one nor the other had any aid longer to hope for. The little French squadron had been forced to stand out to sea before the Russian fleet. La Peyrouse maintained himself nearly a month in his camp. At length, June 23, bombarded by land and sea, and threatened with an assault which his exhausted troops could no longer sustain, he capitulated on condition of reëmbarking with arms and baggage. Such was the issue of the first encounter between French and Russian arms. The result was as honorable to our soldiers as dishonorable to the government: one of those contrasts which we are condemned to find unceasingly during the reign of Louis XV.[1]

A few days after, King Stanislaus made his escape, almost alone and in disguise, through the inundation that extended to the south of Dantzic, and took refuge on Prussian territory. The city, at the end of its resources, consented to recognize the usurper, and to pay a ransom to the Russians (July 7). A considerable number of Polish noblemen rejoined Stanislaus at Königsberg, where the King of Prussia tolerated this immigration, which entitled itself the *Confederate States of the Kingdom of Poland;* but, meanwhile, the leaders of the real, the militant confederations, lost courage on seeing their efforts foiled by Muscovite discipline, and submitted, one after another, to the Saxon King imposed by Russia.

The French government, unwilling to do any thing of importance by itself, had attempted to procure diversions in the direction of Sweden and Turkey; but it did not persuade Sweden in time, and Turkey had relapsed into a barbarous and fanatical government since the disaster to the Vizier Ibrahim in 1730. She was, moreover, occupied with an unsuccessful war against Persia, regenerated by the famous Thamas Kouli Khan: she would, nevertheless, have consented to intervene, had Fleuri been willing to pledge himself to an open alliance against Austria, and to promise not to make a separate peace.[2] He feared that this would determine

[1] Massuet, *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. I. pp. 150–212; *Récit de l'expédition de* 1733, by Col. M. Aubert, in the *Moniteur de l'armée*, May, 1854. The Russians expressed the most lively admiration of their heroic adversaries. M. de La Peyrouse and his officers, carried provisionally to St. Petersburg, were loaded there with honors by the Czarina.

[2] This offer from Turkey was due to a French renegade, the rival of Ripperda, the

Digitized by Google

England to support Austria, and refused. The French ambassador at Constantinople succeeded only in exciting an irruption of the Crimean Tartars in the direction of the Caucasus, insufficient to react seriously on Poland.

In all this great Polish question, the Cardinal de Fleuri had condemned France to play the wretched part of a government that neither knew how to forbear nor to act. Never had the French name been compromised to this point in modern politics.

European affairs, however, had not everywhere the same aspect; and the glance of a Frenchman, on passing from the north to the south, found less afflicting spectacles. Austria compensated for Russia.

The bellicose party, generals and courtiers, seconded by Chauvelin, compelled Fleuri at least to make war by land, since there was no means of constraining him to do so by sea. Chauvelin could not save Poland: he resolved to free Italy. The spring and summer of 1733 were passed in warm negotiations with Spain and Sardinia. The lack of confidence of foreigners in the resolution of Fleuri, and the extravagant pretensions of the Queen of Spain, were the cause of this delay. It was not only for her children, but for herself, that Elizabeth Farnese dreamed of dominion over Italy. By securing to herself an individual sovereignty, she designed to escape the gloomy, monastic existence which was the fate of the dowager-queens of Spain. At length, two secret treaties were signed with the cabinets of Turin and Madrid (September 26–October 25). It was agreed by these to expel the Austrians from Italy: Milanais was to be annexed to Piedmont, and to form a kingdom of Lombardy; Naples and Sicily were to be conquered for the Infant Don Carlos, who was to cede Parma and Tuscany to his younger brother, Don Philip;[1] the Two Sicilies and the *presides* of Tuscany were to be annexed to Spain in case

Count de Bonneval, who, after having deserted in turn the banners of France for those of Austria, and those of Austria for Turkey, seemed to wish to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of his first country by striking a blow to the old enemies of France. — See T. Lavallée, *Revue Indépendante*, January 10, 1844.

[1] The Marquis d'Argenson, the eldest son of the famous lieutenant of the police, and the friend of Chauvelin, had proposed to him to reëstablish the republic at Florence and Sienna. — See *Mém. du marquis d'Argenson*, p. 369, 1 vol. 8vo, 1825. These are not Memoirs, properly speaking, but rather extracts from the vast MS. collection of notes, reflections, anecdotes, and observations on matters of all kinds, left by the Marquis d'Argenson. One of the inheritors of his name has just published a second edition, much more extended, which we have already cited several times, under the title of *Mém. et Journal inédit*, etc., 5 vols. in 18mo, 1857, 1858. The *Société de l'histoire de France* is preparing a third edition on another plan.

Digitized by Google

of the extinction of the male posterity of Elizabeth Farnese. A private agreement between France and Sardinia stipulated that Savoy should be ceded to France as soon as the King of Sardinia possessed Mantua in addition to Milanais. France, in the idea of Chauvelin, was to have the honor of restoring to Italy the national independence which she had been the first to begin to wrest from it under Charles VIII. Chauvelin judged that the sons of Philip V., transplanted to Italy, would become Italians, as Philip V. had himself become Spanish. Confederated Italy, delivered from all foreign rule, would resume the rank that belonged to her among European powers. A single thing marred this beautiful conception, and threatened to frustrate its effect, — the reversion of the Two Sicilies to the crown of Spain, wrung from Chauvelin by the supposed necessity of the Spanish alliance.[1]

While the Spanish and Sardinian alliances were secured, the neutrality of the two maritime powers was obtained by promising not to attack the Austrian Netherlands. Holland asked nothing but to remain at peace, provided that her *barrier* was not touched; and Robert Walpole, to whom the unpopular extension of the excise duties was occasioning very grave embarrassments, acknowledged the sacrifice of our maritime interests made to him by Fleuri, by leaving France a certain latitude of action on the Continent. The reservation relative to Belgium sufficed English interests for the moment; and the cabinet of London was greatly dissatisfied that the Emperor should have excited a European crisis without consulting George II. Prussia and Denmark, as has been seen, remained stationary. The Russians were occupied in invading and restraining Poland. Austria found herself, therefore, alone, when France, then Spain and Sardinia, issued a triple declaration of war against her (October 10–27).

Two French armies immediately crossed the Alps and the Rhine.[2] They were commanded by the last two survivors of the great generals of Louis XIV., Villars and Berwick. It had been judged necessary to make a diversion in Germany to favor the great Italian expedition, October 12–14: a French detachment occupied Nancy without resistance; and an army corps, assembled at Strasburg under the command of Berwick, invested the fort

[1] Garden, *Traités de paix*, t III. p. 172. This recent work is the only one that embraces in a chronological order the whole modern diplomatic history. M. de Garden has remoulded Koch and Schœll. — *Mém. de d'Argenson*, p. 371.

[2] A regulation of May 28, 1733, had ordered cavalry-officers to resume the cuirass, and cavalry-men the breastplate. — See *Mém. de Villars*.

Digitized by Google

of Kehl. The French government excused itself to the Germanic body for this attack on a fortress of the Empire by protesting that it intended to keep nothing which the necessity of reaching Austria compelled it to occupy in Germany. The French levied no contribution, and paid for all that they took. Kehl, the fortifications of which had been badly kept up since the peace of Baden, surrendered October 28. The November rains arrested the army, and no other operation was attempted this year on the Rhine.

Events, on the contrary, were precipitated in Italy. Forty thousand French joined twelve thousand Piedmontese at Vercelli. Five thousand Spanish cavalry passed through the south-east of France and Liguria, to rejoin sixteen thousand infantry in Tuscany that had been transported by the Spanish fleet to Leghorn. Villars, appointed marshal-general (the title that Turenne had borne), set out, October 26, to put himself at the head of the Franco-Piedmontese. A juvenile order reanimated his octogenarian heart. He was faithful to his character in his last words to the cardinal-minister, when he bade him adieu at Fontainebleau before the whole court: "Tell the King that he can dispose of Italy; I am going to conquer it for him."[1]

This was not a vain boast. To *conquer* Italy, that is, to drive the Austrians from it, was not very difficult, provided that each of the allies did his duty. The Emperor had shown a strange lack of foresight. He had refused to listen to Prince Eugene, who urged him to put himself in a posture for war. He had stripped Lombardy to such a degree in order to mass his troops on the Polish frontier, that the Governor of Milanais had scarcely twelve thousand men at his disposal. Until the last moment, Charles VI. had believed either that Fleuri would not dare attack him, or that the King of Sardinia would defend the Alps against the French. The Governor of Milanais had stripped his magazines to furnish munitions to the Piedmontese.

The King of Sardinia, Charles Emmanuel III.,[2] appointed gen-

[1] Villars, p. 414. Here end his memoirs, very valuable concerning the latter part of his life, when he sat in the royal council.

[2] King Victor Amadeus II., father of the late Duchess of Burgundy, and maternal grandfather of Louis XV., abdicated, in 1730, in favor of his son, Charles Emmanuel. His brain becoming enfeebled while his restless temper grew no calmer, he soon took some steps which seemed to indicate the intention of resuming the sceptre which he had given away; upon which his son brutally arrested him, and threw him into a fortress. This was one of the great monarchical scandals of the age. Victor Amadeus II. died a prisoner, November 10, 1732, without Louis XV. or any other sovereign having interested himself in his behalf. They had feigned to believe him insane to exempt themselves from intervening.

Digitized by Google

eralissimo of the combined forces by the treaty of September 26, had not waited for Villars' arrival to enter the field. As early as October 24, the Franco-Piedmontese advanced from the Sesia to the Ticino. Vigevano surrendered on the 27th; Pavia sent its keys on the 31st; the army crossed the Ticino, and Milan submitted November 3. The Austrian garrison retired within the castle. The Governor Daun hastened to concentrate in a small number of places the few troops that he possessed, while waiting for an army to come from Germany to his assistance. There was no room for hesitation: it was necessary to mask the places by detachments, and to march to the Mincio and the Adige, the debouches of the Tyrolean Alps. This was the idea of Villars, who joined Charles Emmanuel, November 11, at Milan. The King of Sardinia rejected this plan. Charles trusted Fleuri indifferently, Queen Elizabeth not at all, and had no official news as yet of the treaty between France and Spain, which had not been signed until October 25, at Madrid. Persuaded that the Queen of Spain would seek to retract the promise of Milanais to the crown of Sardinia, made by France, he thought only of taking possession as speedily as possible of the Milanese towns, as if the substantiality of this possession were not subordinate to the general events of the war. The Franco-Piedmontese army was therefore employed in carrying on sieges. From November to February, Pizzighettone, the citadels of Cremona and Milan, Novara, Tortona, the fort of Fuentes, etc., were forced to capitulate. Three months sufficed for the entire conquest of Milanais; but the great fortified town of Lombardy, Mantua, remained in the hands of the Austrians, and the army of succor was gathering in the Tyrol.

It was still possible either to bar the way to the enemy, or to overpower him on the descent from the Alps. Villars conjured the young candidate to the throne of Naples, Don Carlos, and the Spanish General Montemar, to join the Franco-Piedmontese in order to fall together on the Tyrolean army. The Spaniards had other orders. Their Queen was incapable of postponing for the collective interest the impatience of her dynastic covetousness: she had enjoined on her son to march straight to Naples. The Spaniards, as early as the month of February, 1734, turned their back on Upper Italy, and, from Tuscany, proceeded by the States of Rome to the Neapolitan frontier.

Charles Emmanuel was fully confirmed in his opinion of the views of the Spanish government, which evaded all direct pledge to him. He did not doubt that Queen Elizabeth, Naples once

Digitized by Google

united in her hands to Parma and Tuscany, would aspire to the entire dominion of Italy; and he feared that he should be but feebly supported by the French government against the Bourbons of Spain. Thenceforth he began to play the double game so habitual to his father and his ancestors, was unwilling to deprive himself of all chance of reconciliation with the Emperor, did not complete his contingent, which should have amounted to twenty-four thousand men, and refused to engage the army beyond the Oglio. The advance posts in the territory of Mantua alone were carried; and the greater part of February, March, and April, was consumed in an inaction which drove Villars to despair. Instead of that glorious and decisive campaign by which Villars had thought to terminate his career, the aged warrior found himself carried back to those days of heart-rending deception, when an ally intractable to the teachings of his genius, the Elector of Bavaria, had caused the failure of his great designs. The Imperial army, commanded by the Field-Marshal Merci, had meanwhile descended without obstacle into the territories of Brescia and Mantua. It numbered about forty thousand men, the best soldiers of the Emperor. It did not seek to cross the Oglio to attack Milanais, but crossed the Po by stealth, between San Benedetto and Borgo Forte, in order to carry the war into the territory of Parma, and to place itself between the Franco-Piedmontese and the Spaniards (May 2, 1734). Experience had proved that it was impossible to prevent an operation of this kind, as the crossing of the Po, like that of the Adige, could be effected at too great a number of points. Villars, on learning of this, drew the King of Sardinia beyond the Oglio, and endeavored to take the enemy in the rear, before he had finished crossing the Po. He was too late, and could only overtake and defeat a few detachments. The King and the marshal, while making a reconnoissance with the body-guards of Charles Emmanuel and eighty grenadiers, suddenly found themselves in the presence of a considerable party, which fired upon them. The King was entreated to retire. "That is not the way to escape from the strait," exclaimed Villars. He drew his sword, the King did the same, and both charged at the head of the body-guards. The enemy was broken and dispersed. As the King was complimenting the aged marshal on the vigor and activity that he had preserved, "Sire," returned Villars, "these are the last sparks of my life: this is the last operation of war in which I shall find myself; and

'It is thus, in parting, that I bid it adieu.'"

Digitized by Google

The aged warrior, in fact, disgusted by the obstinate refusal of coöperation that had caused the failure of his plan, had solicited and obtained his recall to France. He set out, May 27, from the camp at Bozzolo; but he never more beheld his country. The exhaustion which he had alleged in support of his request to be recalled was real. Fatigue and sorrow had at last snapped the springs of his life: he was forced by sickness to stop at Turin, where he died, June 17, at eighty-two. He was the last of the great French generals of the ancient régime.

Bloody obsequies were given him. The offensive plan of the Austrians had been retarded by a double attack of apoplexy that had befallen Count de Merci, a general as active as intrepid. His lieutenants, from the end of May to the beginning of June, had attacked the French advance posts, fallen back on the Parma, and suffered themselves to be forced back from the Parma to the Lenza. Merci, recovered, reascended the Parma, and crossed it above the city of Parma. On the morning of June 29, he marched straight to the Franco-Piedmontese intrenchments, the left of which rested on the glacis of Parma, the right on the village of Crocetta and on marshes which extended to the Taro. The road from Parma to Plaisance, bordered by two deep ditches, covered the narrow front of these bulwarks. The King of Sardinia was absent. The oldest of the French lieutenants-general, the Marquis de Coigni, had just received the chief command with a marshal's bâton: he had made good defensive dispositions, and the attack was very rash. It was pushed with extreme vigor by the enemy's right. Merci wished to cut off the Franco-Piedmontese from Parma, and to bring them to a stand at the Po. The assailants filled the fosses, which the fascines did not suffice to fill, with their corpses: the first ranks swallowed up, the rest passed over their bodies. The double ditch of the road to Plaisance was crossed; but the first French rank that gave way had behind it three other ranks of infantry, supported by the cavalry. This heavy mass arrested the enemy by a terrible fire. Merci fell, mortally wounded, like his ancestor, the great Count de Merci, formerly at Nordlingen. Prince Louis of Würtemberg, who took the command, was soon disabled in turn. Five other Austrian generals, and a host of higher officers, strewed the French intrenchments. The fire of the Imperialists slackened by degrees: at evening, they retired to the Secchia. Not a battalion on either side had lost its colors, and not a prisoner had been made. The Franco-Piedmontese had lost almost as many officers as the Austrians, but less than half as

Digitized by Google

many soldiers. The enemy admitted a loss of six thousand men, which our accounts make much greater.

The King of Sardinia arrived at the camp the day after the battle, and resumed the conduct of the army; but he employed a dilatoriness in the pursuit, which it was sought to attribute to the lack of provisions. The main body of the enemy had time to pass through the territory of Modena, gain Mirandola, and intrench itself between this place and Revere, on the Po. The Franco-Piedmontese established themselves on the Secchia, and occupied the territory of Modena, the sovereign of which had shown himself friendly to the Austrians. The Imperial army, reënforced by a few thousand men from the Tyrol, and commanded by a new leader, the Field-Marshal Königsegg, found itself in a condition to move forward anew in less than three weeks after the battle of Parma, and encamped on the right bank of the Secchia, in front of the Franco-Piedmontese. The latter occupied the left bank, from Bondanello to the outlet of the Secchia into the Po, and held Quistello at their centre, as a tête-de-pont, at the right of the Secchia. Both armies remained nearly two months face to face without stirring, but not without suffering much from this unhealthy sojourn on the Po. The Franco-Piedmontese were badly guarded, and the greater part of their horses were turned out to pasture in the territory of Modena. The Secchia was fordable at many points. At day-break, September 15, a corps of Imperialists suddenly feigned an attack on the mouth of the Secchia; while Königsegg in person, with another corps, crossed this river near Bondanello, at the extreme right of the French, and threw himself on the headquarters of the Marshal de Broglie, who had been associated with Coigni in the command of the French army. Broglie only had time to escape in his shirt: his son, his servants, and his equipments were taken. The extreme French right was cut off from the centre. The enemy, descending the Secchia, pushed on to Quistello, seized it, and carried off the baggage, coffers, and plate of the King of Sardinia, a great quantity of artillery and munitions, and many horses and mules. This surprise might have resulted in an utter rout. Nothing of the kind occurred. The Franco-Piedmontese rallied behind a ditch and some fortified cassines. On the next day, the 16th, as the Imperialists seemed manœuvring to move between the Franco-Piedmontese army and the bridges that it had on the Po, behind Guastalla, the King of Sardinia and the two marshals fell back hastily on Guastalla, and anticipated the

Digitized by Google

enemy. On the 17th, a strong detachment, posted at the mouth of the Secchia, which was unable to follow this retreat, was taken entire by the Austrians. Only a few hundred had been killed in the two actions of the 15th and 16th of September; but more than three thousand prisoners remained in the hands of the enemy.

Königsegg sought to make the most of his advantage. Arriving on the evening of September 18 at Luzzara, the scene of a famous encounter between Vendôme and Prince Eugene, he assailed the Franco-Piedmontese anew, on the 19th, in the position where they had halted in front of Guastalla. The allied army occupied a triangle formed by the Po, the Crostolo, and the Crostolino. The allies, who had just received reënforcements, were burning to avenge the reverse of Quistello: they saw the Austrians advance with warlike joy. Königsegg made the most obstinate efforts to penetrate to the pontoon-bridges of the Po, and to crush the allies against the point of the triangle where they were posted. His cavalry and infantry were overpowered again and again: everywhere repulsed with great loss, he was forced to beat a retreat towards the close of the day, with an army reduced at least five or six thousand men. Prince Louis of Würtemberg was killed with many other leaders: a corps of seven battalions is cited which had no commander left but one lieutenant-colonel.

This brilliant retaliation for Quistello, which had cost the allies many men, resulted in nothing. The enemy retired in good order; and, moreover, the King of Sardinia, brave in battle like all his race, either did not know how or did not wish to profit by the victory. Königsegg recrossed at the north of the Po, towards Borgo Forte, September 26, received a few recruits, and extended his troops between the Po and the Oglio. The Franco-Piedmontese occupied the other bank of the Oglio: then, heavy rains having caused the Po, the Oglio, and the Mincio to overflow, the King of Sardinia, in spite of the Marshal de Coigni, insisted on evacuating the country between the Oglio and the Adda, and brought back the army to Cremona. The enemy took advantage of this to extend on the north of the Po as far as the left bank of the Adda: on the south of the Po, the French maintained themselves as far as Guastalla, and kept the territory of Modena. The armies, devastated by disease even more than by the sword, finally took up their winter-quarters in December. Rivers of blood had been shed to no effect in Lombardy during the past six months.[1]

[1] Massuet, *Hist. de la dernière guerre*, t. I. pp. 104–138, t. II. pp. 332–363; Col-

Digitized by Google

The campaign of the Spaniards in the Two Sicilies had been far more decisive. There had not been here the internal wranglings and enervating suspicions attendant on coalitions. The Spaniards, having to account to no one, had simply gone straight forward. March 26, twenty thousand men had entered the kingdom of Naples by the way of Frosinone, while the Spanish fleet coasted along the shore with eight thousand more soldiers. The Austrians had eighteen or twenty thousand men on the Neapolitan territory. They might have concentrated and kept the field, meanwhile avoiding a collision until they had received aid: they dispersed, on the contrary, among the fortified towns, and thought to ruin the invading army by obliging it to carry on sieges. This was an exceedingly bad plan against enemies masters of the sea, and favored by the population. The promise made by Don Carlos to abolish the taxes established by "the tyrannical government of the *Tedeschi*" (Germans) had won the Neapolitans: they had, moreover, the same reason for turning against Charles VI. that had induced them to turn in his favor in 1707, when he was not yet emperor, — the desire of having a king for themselves alone, and of no longer being under the jurisdiction of a foreign government. The Austrian viceroy, seeing the Spanish fleet master of Procida, Ischia, and Pozzuoli, and the army at Aversa, evacuated Naples, with the exception of the castles (May 3). Naples immediately called in Don Carlos: the four castles surrendered from April 23 to May 3. May 15, Don Carlos, after a solemn entry, in which he lavished gold with an unsparing hand, issued the decree by which his father ceded to him the throne of the Two Sicilies. Thus was inaugurated the dynasty of the Bourbons of Naples under favorable auspices which time has not confirmed. The first consequences of this revolution were very happy; and this beautiful country, which the Austrians had so cruelly oppressed, breathed again under an amiable and benevolent young prince, and a wise minister, Bernardo Tanucci, ex-professor of law at Pisa, who caused security, economy, and justice to reign in a land where these blessings were well-nigh unknown.

A few days after the proclamation of the new King (May 25), the easy successes of the Spaniards had been confirmed by a victory which left the enemy without resources. Their general, Montemar, had pursued to Pouille the only corps which the Austrians

letta, *Storia di Napoli*, t. I. l. i; Botta, *Storia d'Italia*, t. VIII. l. xl; Muratori, *Annal*, t. XVI.; Campo-Raso, *Comentarios*, t. II.

Digitized by Google

had retained outside the fortified towns, and which was approaching the Adriatic to receive some reënforcements of Croats by sea. Before the main body of the reënforcements had disembarked, the Austrian corps, at least eight thousand men strong, was taken or utterly destroyed at Bitonto. The large garrisons of Pescara, Gaeta, and Capua, capitulated from the month of July to the month of October, and the whole kingdom of Naples recognized Don Carlos. Montemar made a descent in Sicily at the end of August with thirteen thousand men. The Austrians had less than six thousand in this large island, even more unfriendly to them than Naples. The people rose everywhere in favor of the Spaniards. The Austrians made a serious defence only in the castles of Messina, Syracuse, and Trapani; but, unable to hope for any aid, they at length surrendered these fortresses from March to July, 1735, and the third branch of the Bourbons found itself completely master of the Two Sicilies. The aged Alberoni, forgetting the ingratitude of Elizabeth Farnese, rejoiced, in the obscurity of his retreat at Plaisance, on hearing the echo of the cannon that expelled the Austrians from Milan, Naples, and Palermo.

In short, although the suspicions of Charles Emmanuel, and the audacious bravery of the generals of the Emperor, who had, in some sort, inverted the rôles between the French and the Austrians, had rendered the campaign of the Po indecisive, the affairs of Austria were in a very bad condition beyond the Alps. Lower Italy was irrevocably lost; and Upper Italy was destined to be so, provided that the generals of the three allied crowns were willing to act in concert for one single season.

On the Rhine, the campaign of 1734 was not so fruitful in events, although great forces had been put on foot on both sides, especially on the side of the French. The Emperor had succeeded in drawing the Empire into his quarrel by showing the Germanic territory violated by the taking of Kehl. The French government would indeed have acted more wisely if it had attacked, instead of Kehl, the Austrian town of Breisach, which would have given no cause of complant to the Empire. The Diet of Ratisbon had declared war against France, March 13, 1734, despite the protests of the three electors of the House of Bavaria, — the Duke of Bavaria, the Archbishop of Cologne, and the Palatine. It had promised the Emperor forty thousand men, then a hundred thousand! Prince Eugene would therefore have at his disposal a formidable army: but there was much to diminish it; and the Diet, which did not feel the general interests seriously menaced,

Digitized by Google

employed very little zeal in fulfilling its engagements. Austria was forced to admit that it was not easy to dispense with the guineas of England and the ducats of Holland. The French found themselves first on foot, although later than was desired by their general, Berwick, who had returned to Strasburg as early as the end of March, and had found nothing ready for the projected siege of Philippsburg.[1] Every thing had been retarded by the negligence of the minister of war, Bouin d'Angervilliers, and above all by the intrigues of a visionary schemer, who bewildered the aged Fleuri by his loquacity and presumptuous assurance, which the court mistook for the boldness of genius, — the Count de Belle-Isle, the grandson of the unfortunate Fouquet, who had revived the fortunes of his humbled family, and dreamed of the destiny of great captains, as his ancestor had dreamed of that of great ministers. He sought to persuade Fleuri to cause the army to march from the Rhine directly to Saxony and Bohemia. The cardinal recoiling from this rash scheme, Belle-Isle at least succeeded in procuring the command of a separate corps to occupy Treves and the Lower Moselle, and to take Trarbach.[2] All this prevented Berwick from commencing his operations before the end of April. At length, Trarbach being taken, and all our forces at liberty, Berwick hurled beyond the Rhine three large bodies of troops, — the first two by the way of Kehl and Fort Louis; the third, much lower down, by the mouth of the Necker (May 3). The enemy's army, greatly inferior to the French, was posted behind the old lines of Etlingen, between the Dourlach Mountains and the Rhine, at the north of Rastadt, and was about to be shut in between the different French corps. Eugene, on arriving at the German camp, April 26, hastily evacuated the lines of Etlingen, and fell back with his army to Heilbronn. A diversion which he had ordered a strong detachment to attempt against Upper Alsace, in the direction of Breisach, had just been repulsed by the armed peasantry: it was the first time that the popular militia of Alsace had signalized themselves under the French colors against their ancient suzerain, Austria.

Berwick did not follow Eugene in his retreat, but caused Phi-

[1] A regulation had been issued, February 13, 1734, concerning the equipments of officers, to oblige them to diminish their luxury, and to relieve the army of the multitude of servants, beasts of burden, and carriages with which they encumbered it. The preceding year, it is said, there had been as many as eighteen hundred post-chaises at Strasburg. — See *Journal de Barbier*, t. II. p. 28.

[2] Five-hundred-pound shell were employed for the first time in this siege.

Digitized by Google

lippsburg to be invested by all the French corps united (the end of May). There were full a hundred thousand men. Two-thirds of this powerful army were designed to guard the circumvallation, while the rest carried on the siege. Berwick did not witness the success of the arrangements that he had made. On the morning of June 12, as he incautiously mounted the banquette of the trenches to examine the works, two batteries, the one French, the other the enemy's, fired at the same time: a shot, perhaps a French one, carried off his head! Berwick and Villars thus died five days from each other. Contrary to their character, the grave and prudent Berwick perished through imprudence: the impetuous Villars died in his bed. The last rays of the sun of Louis XIV. expired with them.

There was a moment of anxiety at Versailles and throughout France. The rising of the Rhine and of the little rivers that descended from the snowy mountains of Swabia inundated the camp, rendered it very difficult to carry on the works, and obstructed the communication between the quarters. Eugene, having received all the reënforcements for which he could hope, had planted himself in sight of the French intrenchments, and called to mind the fatal action of Turin, in which he had formerly forced our siege lines. The circumstances were different: the Marshal d'Asfeld,[1] Berwick's successor, could move formidable masses upon whatever point of the circumvallation the enemy might attack: Eugene had only sixty thousand men, and the quality of these troops was in general indifferent, the élite of the Imperial forces having crossed over into Lombardy. The hero of Hochstadt and Turin had grown old, was conscious of it, and decided not to risk his glory in a more than doubtful attack. He suffered Philippsburg to capitulate after a noble defence (July 18). Eugene prevented the French, without much difficulty, from pushing their advantages farther: the Marshal d'Asfeld, a good engineering officer, knew little of field warfare, and dared not undertake any thing of importance.

D'Asfeld, aged and fatigued, requested to be replaced after the campaign. The Marshal de Coigni, who was no younger, and who had been unable to agree in Lombardy either with his second in command, the Marshal de Broglie, another old and indifferent captain, or, above all, with King Charles Emmanuel, was given him as a successor. The armies of France, like France itself,

[1] He was not German, as his name might lead us to believe, but the son of a merchant of the Rue Saint-Denis, named Bidal, ennobled in Germany.

Digitized by Google

were beginning to be governed by a bureaucracy which had not even the advantages of experience. As Fleuri had not been reared in the midst of important public affairs, so the generals that succeeded Villars and Berwick had not been trained to great military operations.[1] Coigni did nothing on the Rhine, in 1735, that deserves the attention of history. Prince Eugene, whose forces were diminishing, and who was badly seconded by the cabinet of Vienna, abandoned to his rivals in power and to those envious of him, contented himself with holding Coigni in check, and interdicting to him the siege of Mayence.

In Italy, the command of the French troops had been transferred to the Duke de Noailles, recently appointed Marshal of France. Age had not given more clearness or stability of mind to this ancient adversary of Law; but neither had it taken away from him his active and comprehensive faculties. He found the army, in the month of March, 1735, in the most deplorable condition. The great losses caused by the sword of the enemy and the fever of the rice-fields were the least evil: it was, above all, a moral evil that was preying upon the army. Not only was the old license of the military nobility aggravated to such a point as to permit the most impure of vices, unnatural vice, to be displayed almost openly in the camp, but the cupidity which the Regency had infiltrated into the veins of the nobility stifled the sentiment of honor, and broke the natural tie of affection between the leaders and the soldiery. The captains prevented their companies from being filled up in order to make money on the pay; the colonels became the accomplices of the captains, and aided them to gain over or to intimidate the commissaries of war; the gratuities designed for the wounded officers were given by favor, and not on account of wounds. The health and life of the soldiers were made matters of speculation: during the rigorous season, they were left in open cloisters and porches; the hospitals were neglected or abandoned. The soldiers, famished and desperate, abandoned themselves to universal marauding. The most horrible excesses are cited: instances are told of women whose fingers and ears were cut off to tear from them their gold rings![2]

The same pillage, if not the same atrocities, had taken place

[1] Those who attained to high grades by commanding the companies of soldier-officers that formed the king's household were no better acquainted with them than simple cavalry-captains: those who attained to them by more important services, had, nevertheless, thanks to the mechanical invention of Louvois, the *ordre du tableau*, commanded detachments only in turn, that is to say, rarely, and advanced only by seniority.

[2] *Mém. de Noailles*, p. 294; F. Barrière, *Avant propos aux Mém. de madame du Hausset.*

Digitized by Google

the preceding year in Germany. The demoralization of the nobles and the officers, which engendered that of the soldiery, was only one of the symptoms of the social decomposition that had commenced. It is a striking fact, that, amidst so much moral ruin, the essential trait of the Gallic race, martial valor, should have been maintained unalterable.

Noailles succeeded in restoring some order in the army of Italy; but he was not in a condition to hold the field before the month of May. The Spaniards had finally decided to coöperate with the Franco-Piedmontese in Lombardy; and the conqueror of Naples, Montemar, after taking from the Austrians the *presides* of Tuscany, joined Charles Emmanuel and Noailles (the end of May). The Imperial army, which had not suffered less than the French, and which had lost its best soldiers in battle and the hospital, found itself unable to resist the united forces of the three allied crowns. The Field-Marshal Königsegg evacuated the country south of the Po; then, leaving a large garrison in Mantua, fell back on the Italian Tyrol, completely abandoning the field to his adversaries (the middle of June). It seemed as if the allies had nothing more to do than to mask the debouches of the territory of Trent, and to press the siege of Mantua: but to take Mantua was not every thing; the question was to know what to do with it when it was taken. The court of Spain laid claim to Mantua for Don Carlos, without even giving Charles Emmanuel the direct guarantee which he demanded for Milanais. The King of Sardinia, as may be readily comprehended, thenceforth showed very little zeal in seconding the attack on Mantua, and refused to send thither his park of siege artillery. Fleuri would not and the Spaniards could not make up at great cost for this refusal of Charles Emmanuel. They limited themselves to a blockade which might be greatly prolonged without effect, and let slip the opportunity of wholly expelling the enemy from the Peninsula.

The war was therefore waged laxly, in 1735, in Lombardy, as on the Rhine. Towards autumn, the Imperialists made some offensive movements in two directions, — they again descended from the territory of Trent, by the left bank of the Adige, on the Venetian territory, the neutrality of which was very little respected by either party; and the principal corps of their army of Germany, which was no longer commanded by Eugene, crossing the Rhine, again ascended the Moselle as far as Treves. They were face to face, when a suspension of arms arrested the belligerent forces.[1]

[1] *Mém. de Noailles*, p. 297; Massuet, *Hist. de la guerre présente*, t. IV.

Digitized by Google

Negotiations had not ceased during the past eighteen months. Fleuri desired only to quit as speedily as possible a war into which he had been drawn in spite of himself; and Robert Walpole, in refusing to the Emperor the armed coöperation of England, had not designed to abstain from all intervention in a quarrel that so seriously affected the balance of power in Europe. England and Holland had offered their mediation in the month of June, 1734; and, as early as this epoch, the King of Sardinia had attempted to enter into a secret negotiation with the Emperor through the medium of the English cabinet. The Emperor, after useless intrigues with George II. and the parliament to destroy Walpole and raise to power a warlike minister, had resigned himself to the necessity of accepting the mediation. The allied crowns had done the same. Towards the end of February, 1735, the plan of a compromise was transmitted by the mediators to the ambassadors of the belligerent powers at London and the Hague. The propositions of England and Holland may be summed up thus: 1st, The discussions as to the right to the sovereignty of Poland were to cease; Stanislaus was to abdicate the crown, retaining the title of King and his patrimonial estates; a full and entire amnesty was to be granted for the *disturbances* of Poland; the party opposed to Stanislaus was to accept the act of abdication, and to thank this prince for his sacrifice through a solemn deputation; the Russians were to evacuate Poland. 2d, The Emperor was to cede Naples and Sicily to the Infant, Don Carlos, and Novara and Tortona to the King of Sardinia; France and her allies were to restore to the Emperor all the rest that they had taken from him; Don Carlos was to cede to the Emperor his rights over Tuscany and Parma. 3d, France and Sardinia were to guarantee the Austrian Pragmatic Sanction, and Spain was to renew her guarantee; 4th, An armistice was to be declared, preliminary to the discussion of this project.

The plan was, upon the whole, very advantageous to the Emperor, since he was indemnified for what he had lost, and very important restitutions were made to him: he had, besides, the guarantee so warmly desired; and the party that he had supported remained masters of Poland, at the price of an honorary satisfaction given to France. He felt it, and, without ceasing to complain, appeared disposed to accept the substance of the project. Walpole believed himself able to count equally on the acceptance of Fleuri, who had almost promised it in advance; but his hope was disappointed. The Queen of Spain was furious at the propo-

Digitized by Google

sition to cede Parma and Tuscany. The French court and public were indignant that it should be designed to sacrifice the father-in-law of the King with no other compensation than a vain title; and the minister of foreign affairs, faithful to the idea of driving the Austrians from Italy, adroitly circumvented the cardinal. Fleuri dared not give his assent to the project, and the three allied crowns replied only that they were ready to agree to an armistice in order to negotiate. A second declaration, transmitted to the mediators by the allies, July 20, 1735, affirmed that the propositions made concerning the Italian States increased rather than diminished the power of the Emperor on the Peninsula. It was Chauvelin, indeed, that spoke here.

Russia, on her side, rejected a general armistice that would have comprised Poland, where parties of the confederated nobility were still scouring the country in the name of Stanislaus. The Czarina, who had been unable to succor the Emperor in 1734, despatched sixteen thousand Russians to Germany in June, 1735, and promised Charles VI. twenty-four thousand more. The Russians appeared for the first time on the Rhine in September, 1735. They remained in reserve on the right bank. The war seemed ready to become universal. England had made great levies of soldiers and sailors at the very moment when she was proposing her plan of conciliation; Denmark had concluded a treaty of subsidy with her in 1734; Sweden had just signed one with France in June, 1735; Portugal, embroiled with Spain, was treating with the Emperor, and claiming the protection of the English fleets; Turkey was striving to rid herself of the Persian war in order to prepare to profit by the reverses of the Emperor. The noise of arms resounded everywhere: but the head of the English cabinet did not on this account become more warlike; and the formal refusal to succor the Emperor, renewed by Holland, served as an excuse to Walpole for England. The English minister relied on persuading Fleuri to accept his plan on condition of a few modifications; but the negotiation took another channel. When the Emperor was forced to renounce all hope of assistance from his former allies, in his indignation at what he very unjustly called their defection, he thought only of treating directly with France. Fleuri, at the first indirect overtures, hastened to send a secret agent to Vienna, unknown to his allies. Chauvelin could not avert the blow. He vainly entreated the cardinal not to guarantee the Austrian Pragmatic Sanction, except at the price of the Emperor's entire renunciation of Italy. When he saw

Digitized by Google

this noble cause lost, and profound policy decidedly impossible with Fleuri, he fell back rapidly on the special interests of France by one of those evolutions that belong only to the supple and powerful mind of the true statesman: he strove to cause this peace, which he had dreamed of as so glorious, to be at least useful, and to contribute to the completion of the French territory, — that work transmitted by our national politicians from generation to generation. He had the consolation of succeeding in this.

October 3, 1735, preliminary articles were signed at Vienna between France and Austria. The first article, concerning Poland, differed from the Anglo-Batavian project, inasmuch as it no longer stipulated for the solemn deputation from the party opposed to Stanislaus, and announced the perpetual guarantee of the liberties and constitutions of the Poles, particularly of the free election of their king. Next came the indemnity granted to Stanislaus: it was in this that Chauvelin had succeeded in gaining an advantage of the highest importance to France. The Emperor consented that the young Duke, Francis of Lorraine, to whom was destined the hand of his eldest daughter, Maria Theresa, should exchange the duchies of Lorraine and Bar for the reversion of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, which was to be taken from Don Carlos. Stanislaus was to enter in possession of Barrois immediately, and of Lorraine as soon as Tuscany devolved on Duke Francis, which it did not appear would be long delayed, as the last of the Medicis was wasting away, worn out by debauchery. After Stanislaus' death, the duchies of Lorraine and Bar were to be ceded in full sovereignty to the crown of France; the Emperor promising to employ his good offices to obtain the consent of the Empire, and the King of France surrendering for his father-in-law and himself the vote and seat in the Diet of the Empire that belonged to the Duke of Lorraine. Naples and Sicily, with the *presides* or Spanish places on the side of Tuscany, remained the property of Don Carlos. Tortona, with Novara or Vigevano, and the Imperial fiefs of Langhes in Liguria, remained in possession of the King of Sardinia. The Duchy of Parma was to be ceded in full possession to the Emperor, who thus recovered, as well as the Empire, the rest of his losses. The King of France guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction. The preliminaries were to be converted into a definitive treaty in a congress to which the maritime powers, the Czarina, and King Augustus, were invited.[1]

[1] Concerning the negotiations, see Rousset, t. X.

Digitized by Google

The enfranchisement of Italy was thus wholly abandoned, since the Emperor recovered almost all his possessions in Lombardy, acquired Parma directly, and Tuscany, granted to the affianced husband of his heiress, indirectly, and obtained dominion over Central Italy, while losing that of Lower Italy. Fleuri had at first demanded nothing for France but the little Duchy of Bar: Chauvelin in some sort forced him to gain Lorraine for us! It was the last continental acquisition of the monarchy. This rich and beautiful country, French by language and position, and capriciously attached by the feudal bond to the German Empire, had ceased to be dangerous to France, since it had been locked between Trois Évêchés, the towns of the Sarre, and Alsace, which had become French, and since France had occupied it at pleasure without striking a blow. Lorraine had been long since reduced to a negative value: it was about to increase the positive strength of France. Our eastern provinces were to form thenceforth a compact body.

The minister who knew how to pursue the progress of the French nationality even in the decline of the ancient régime deserves to live in the memory of modern France.

The order to suspend hostilities was sent to the armies in Italy and Germany at the beginning of November. The King of Sardinia, who expected little better from his allies, resigned himself to the necessity of again descending from the throne of Lombardy; but the Queen of Spain and her maniac husband learned with concentrated rage of what they called the *treason* of France. Their discomfiture was the more poignant, inasmuch as they had paid subsidies to the French army in Italy: it was the first time that France received instead of giving, which the economical Fleuri must have considered as his most glorious triumph. Their wrath was powerless: the Spaniards were not in a condition to dispute Italy with the Imperialists by themselves alone. Their general, Montemar, was forced to fall back on Parma and Tuscany, then provisionally to accept the armistice. April 15, 1736, the court of Spain, trembling with rage, signed the preliminaries of Vienna, which the Germanic Diet ratified on its side, May 18. Conformably to the agreements of Vienna, King Stanislaus had abdicated formally at Königsberg, January 27, 1736: two months afterwards he bade adieu to Prussian hospitality to return to France. All of his partisans acknowledged Augustus III.; and a general Diet of pacification was convoked at Warsaw, June 25. Proud even in its humiliation, the Polish Diet

Digitized by Google

declared all the *brethren* reunited; and, morally stigmatizing in some sort the king that had been imposed on it by force, it set a price on the head of whomsoever in future, in an interregnum, should call in foreign troops, and obliged Augustus III. to promise that the Saxon army should quit the republic at the same time as the Russians. Unfortunately, it took a sort of national pride in persevering in the fatal course of religious persecution, and in making, in the presence of the schismatic armies of Russia, new laws against heretics and schismatics. Dissenters were excluded from eligibility to the Diet, and from all functions that conferred a share in the legislative and judicial power, with the penalty for high treason against those among them who should solicit the protection of foreign powers to reëstablish their ancient rights. Russia made no protest: this unjust and discordant law promised her too useful weapons.[1]

Neither was the definitive treaty waited for to execute the rest of the preliminaries of Vienna. The Emperor made a new concession to France,—he consented that Lorraine should be delivered to Stanislaus at the same time as the Duchy of Bar; no longer when the Duke of Lorraine should be invested with the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, but as soon as the Imperial garrisons should be received into Tuscany in the place of the Spanish garrisons, and the Kings of Spain and the Two Sicilies should have given their renunciation in due form (April 11–August 28, 1736). The Emperor had hastened to be fully sure of peace in order to be able to execute, in accordance with Russia, great projects against the Ottoman Empire, and to indemnify himself on the Danube for what he lost on the Mediterranean. Spain, on the contrary, thought only of raising up one difficulty after another. The death of the able minister José Patiño (November 3, 1736), who held in his hand all the moving springs of the Spanish government, meanwhile, induced Queen Elizabeth to permit the exchange of reciprocal renunciations between the Emperor, Spain, and the new King of Naples (January 5, 1737); but Spain had not lost all hope of exciting some difficulty. Elizabeth knew how much Chauvelin regretted leaving so large a part of Italy to the Emperor, and hoped that the decrepitude or death of Fleuri would soon cause the real authority to devolve on this irreconcilable enemy of Austria. A cabinet revolution at Versailles destroyed these hopes.

Chauvelin had exercised great influence over the aged Fleuri

[1] Rousset, t. XI. pp. 137–209; Rulhière, *Anarchie de Pologne*, t. I. pp. 1–153.

Digitized by Google

for some years, at the price of much circumspection and many sacrifices. He had been forced to immolate, in person, the keeper of the seals to the minister of foreign affairs, to assume the unpopularity of the decrees of the council and *lettres de cachet* against Jansenism, and to disguise and extenuate as long as possible the greatness and boldness of his diplomatic plans. He had succeeded in this manner, since 1732, in playing the part, so to speak, of second prime minister, in aiding the cardinal in his work with the King, and in causing the other ministers to work at his house as at that of an acknowledged superior. The dawn of a great ministry seemed breaking in the twilight in which Fleuri retained France. Events did not permit Chauvelin to remain long enough in the shade. In 1733, Chauvelin, to use the expression of Frederick II. *juggled* war out of Fleuri: in 1735, the cardinal revenged himself by *juggling* peace out of Chauvelin. Distrust had begun to enter the old man's soul. The natural indecision of Fleuri, and the need that he had of this laborious and enlightened auxiliary, at first protected Chauvelin; but, as soon as their growing lack of harmony was perceived, the ambitious courtiers who were jealous of the elevation of Chauvelin coalesced with the cabinets of London and Vienna. It is pretended that Horace Walpole caused a correspondence to be stolen in Spain, after the death of Patiño, which that minister had held with Chauvelin unknown to Fleuri: it is certain that these secret relations were represented to the King and the cardinal as a state-crime. Chauvelin was exhibited to the cardinal as an ingrate that was aiming to disgust him with the ministry in order to usurp his place. Louis XV., on his side, had taken an aversion to the minister of foreign affairs for the most futile reasons, — because he talked and laughed too loudly in his presence; a susceptibility which well characterizes his soul, pusillanimous in great things, and haughty in trifles. Louis XIV. troubled himself little about the polish of Colbert's manners. February 20, Chauvelin was exiled to his estates by a *lettre de cachet*. Fleuri bade him adieu in a letter in which the old man reproached him for having kept up a secret foreign correspondence, and for having broken off the pacific measures of the King; and concluded by saying, "You have been wanting in duty to the King, to the people, and to yourself."

Posterity will not ratify the decree uttered by the pedagogue of Louis XV.: it will pity the eminent politician who was condemned, in the strength of manhood, to the long tedium of inaction and exile, and who, a man of action rather than a philosopher,

Digitized by Google

consumed his life in regrets, and useless efforts to return to power.[1] The fate of Chauvelin was to be thenceforth, to the end of the monarchy, that of every statesman who sought worthily to serve France.[2]

Chauvelin was replaced in the ministry of foreign affairs by an intendant of finance, Amelot de Chaillou, a cipher ruled by a fop as fickle and light as the wind, — the minister of the marine, Maurepas. An ambitious schemer, of gigantic dreams and chimerical imagination, the Count de Belle-Isle, imposed himself more and more on the aged minister by the very contrast of their minds. Inert mediocrity, triumphant with Fleuri, was soon to be subjugated by adventurous intrigue, through having been unwilling to submit to the ascendency of firm and active reason.

The conduct of the King had been wretched in every point in this occurrence. A few of his familiars having attempted to take up the defence of Chauvelin with him, he promised them secrecy towards Fleuri, and failed in his word. One of these noblemen, the Duke de La Trémoille, had, it is said, the courage to declare to Louis XV. that he remained the servant of the King, but that he renounced the friendship of Louis.[3] This was not the first time, moreover, that the King played towards the cardinal the part of a treacherous schoolboy who denounces his comrades after promising to be silent. The preceptor of Louis XV. had succeeded but too well in stifling in him all manly dignity: Louis long remained a great, sullen child, and became a man only through vice.

The execution of the preliminaries of Vienna was consummated in the course of 1737; the Duchy of Bar, then the Duchy of Lorsaine, was surrendered to Stanislaus in February and March; the Duchy of Parma was delivered to the Emperor in April. Lorraine at first regretted its dynasty, almost as old as the Capets, and associated with its fate for seven centuries.[4] The last duke but one, Leopold, who died in 1729, had, by a wise and paternal administration, effaced in great part the traces of the prolonged calamities drawn upon the province by his grand-uncle, the Duke Charles IV. The new prince, Stanislaus, soon consoled the people

[1] He did not die until 1762.

[2] See *Mém. de d'Argenson*, p. 312, 1825; *Journal de Barbier*, t. I. p. 402, t. II. pp. 124–134; Flassan, t. V. p. 76.

[3] Lacretelle, t. II. p. 183.

[4] Gerard of Alsace had been the first Duke of Upper Lorraine in 1048: the duchy had never gone out of his house.

Digitized by Google

of Lorraine by following the example of Leopold. Beneficent, loving, and affable, the protector of agriculture and commerce, and the friend of letters and arts, he was destined, in turn, to leave behind him a popular memory: it is to him especially that Nancy owes that monumental aspect, that air of a little capital, which strikes travellers. He was able to do more than Leopold, owing to the wholly new position towards France that had been given Lorraine. From a continually suspected and continually oppressed neighbor, Lorraine became the protégé of France, while waiting till it should become wholly French. As early as 1738 (August), a royal declaration admitted the people of Lorraine to all the advantages of native-born Frenchmen: the union was already morally consummated.

The Ex-Duke of Lorraine did not wait long for the compensation promised him. The last of the Medicis, John Gaston, died July 9, 1737, carrying with him to the tomb a name formerly glorious, but degraded for the last two centuries. The younger branch of the Medicis had ruined Tuscany as the eldest branch of the House of Austria had ruined Spain. Like Spain under the French princes, Tuscany began to revive under the Lorraine princes, and with a more rapid progress, at least in material respects.

The exchanges of territory effected, the definitive treaty was protracted more than a year longer. The guarantee of the Austrian Pragmatic Sanction was warmly rejected by public opinion in France, and was repugnant to Fleuri himself: the Elector of Bavaria conjured the cabinet of Versailles not to ratify an engagement so contrary to his pretensions and to the secret engagements that bound France and Bavaria. Fleuri, notwithstanding, after exhausting all delays and all excuses, finally yielded to the importunities of the Imperial government. Peace was signed November 18, 1738, not in a general congress, which was not assembled, but at Vienna, between the ministers of the Emperor and the ambassador of France.

"His Sacred Most Christian Majesty," says Article X., "moved both by the ardent desire for the preservation of the balance of power in Europe, and by the consideration of the conditions of peace to which His Sacred Imperial Majesty has consented principally for this reason, binds himself in the strongest manner to defend the order of succession in the House of Austria . . . . more fully explained by the Pragmatic Sanction, etc. . . . ; he will defend the said order of succession with all his forces,

Digitized by Google

against any one whomsoever, as often as there may be need; he promises to defend him or her, who, according to the said order, may succeed to the kingdoms, provinces, and States now possessed by His Sacred Imperial Majesty, and to maintain them therein in perpetuity." [1]

It was impossible to find terms more explicit. The Emperor was at last satisfied: all Europe, except the princes of Bavaria, had guaranteed the integral transmission of his inheritance to his eldest daughter. We shall soon see what this guarantee was worth.

The treaty of Vienna was accepted by the King of Sardinia, February 3, 1739; by the Kings of Spain and Naples, April 21.

More than three years had elapsed between the preliminaries of peace and the definitive treaty; but to the people, in France, peace had dated from the day of the reduction of the army and the taxes.[2] The Comptroller-General Orri (the son of that Orri who had directed the finances of Spain during the War of the Succession) had provided for the expenses of the war by creating life *rentes* (November, 1733–August, 1734), and by procuring the reëstablishment of the income-tax abolished since 1717 (November 17, 1733), and of the offices of governors of towns, *maires* and other municipal functionaries, — offices which it was the habit to create and abolish almost periodically (November, 1733). The clergy had obtained from the King the declaration that their property neither had been nor could be comprised in the institution of the income-tax (March, 1734): but this declaration had been sold, and not given by the royal power; and the clergy were forced to resign themselves to the necessity of paying almost the equivalent of their income-tax under the name of a gratuity: they had given twelve millions in 1734, and ten in 1735. The government had promised that the income-tax should cease three months after the publication of peace. Fleuri acted honorably in this respect: he did more than keep his word to the letter. The income-tax was abolished January 1, 1737; that is, as soon as the territorial exchanges were secured. Orri strove to extinguish by means of lotteries a part of the burdens imposed on the State by the new life-*rentes* (December, 1737–August, 1739): the tickets were paid for partly in specie, partly in titles of *rentes*. The vil-

[1] Wenck, *Codex Juris gentium*, t. I. p. 109.

[2] A declaration of August 25, 1737, condemned to the pillory and the galleys whomsoever should make recruits by fraud and force, or should keep enlisted men in private confinement. — *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 30.

Digitized by Google

lages and communes were permitted to elect their municipal officers, in spite of the sale of these offices that had taken place.[1]

From 1736, France had some years of material tranquillity, scarcely disturbed by the eternal warfare of the Bull, constantly more petty and more monotonous. The combatants were not less infuriated, but their circle became narrowed by degrees; and the multitude, attracted elsewhere, scarcely regarded them except with an abstracted or disdainful eye. We shall see later whither public opinion was drifting, and shall examine, as a whole, the state of minds, and the movement of ideas and manners. As regards this last point, the moral condition, it is only necessary to point out here the kind of revolution that had transpired at the court, and the new habits of the King; the private life of Louis XV. having counted among the principal symptoms and the immediate causes of the fall of ancient society. Until the age of twenty-five, that is, until 1735, Louis had set, at least in appearance, the example of a regular life, — a *bourgeois* life, as was said at court. Nevertheless it is affirmed, that, scarcely adolescent, before his marriage he had not escaped an infamous vice, which some young courtiers, corrupt from childhood, had borrowed from the traditions of Henri III. and the brother of Louis XIV.;[2] and that Fleuri saved the young King from this degradation. However this may be, the devotion which the cardinal had taught the King, wholly external and formal as it was, served him for some time as a curb. Louis never had any tenderness for his wife; Fleuri himself had contributed to prejudice him against her, for fear that she might gain possession of his mind: but he appears to have been materially faithful to her during some years, which were signalized by the birth of two sons and several daughters. A court without intrigues and a King without passions did not suit the views of the courtiers. There was a general conspiracy among them to *awaken* Louis. The hero of the plot was the Duke de Richelieu, seduction personified, vice made man. Louis was first impelled to the excesses of the table: to the taste for wine were joined the love of play and that of the chase; then came some passing gallantries; finally, an adroit and audacious valet de chambre threw into

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 40; Bailli, t. II. p. 115; *Journal de Louis XV.*

[2] Soulavie, *Mémoires du maréchal de Richelieu*, t. V. p. 55. This by no means commendable chronicler of the scandals of the eighteenth century is far from deserving entire confidence; but certain allusions of the *Memoirs* of Villars (p. 304) seem to confirm his assertions. Perhaps, however, the words of Villars might be interpreted in a less odious sense.

Digitized by Google

the arms of the King a lady of the court, who was enamoured with his fine mien, and who had made him all the advances, — the Countess de Mailli (1732). This had not at first the expected results. Madame de Mailli's morals were lax; but she was neither ambitious nor covetous: she saw in her intrigue with the King only a secret intimacy with a man that pleased her; and was so little in Fleuri's way, that the aged cardinal was suspected of having had a hand in the affair. Mailli suited him as well as any other mistress, since the time for mistresses had come. The Queen, it must be acknowledged, would have rendered this event almost inevitable, even if the courtiers had not conspired against the fidelity of the King. It was impossible to be a more irreproachable woman, but it was impossible to be one more devoid of tact, than Maria Leczinska. Grave and austere, of rigid and often most inopportune devotion, she did every thing that was necessary to disgust a husband younger than herself, whose sterile mind needed to be excited and aroused, and who, if he had a cold heart, had very ardent blood. Louis no longer in any wise felt the effects of his sickly childhood. A domestic quarrel, caused by the coldness of the Queen, brought about the rupture desired by the intriguers of the court. Madame de Mailli was declared the mistress of the King (1735). Fleuri, who had tolerated the fact, would have gladly prevented or stifled the scandal; but he felt on this occasion the limits of a power until then absolute, and took care not to persist.

The curb was broken: Louis was never more to pause in this career. He had been restrained only by a sort of physical timidity, joined to the fear of hell; but all innate sentiments of honor, all delicacy of heart, were unknown to his unhappy nature. He was not more faithful to his mistress than his wife, and soon exceeded the bounds of ordinary libertinism by giving to France an unheard-of spectacle. Madame de Mailli was the eldest of five sisters of the House of Nesle, all remarkable either for beauty or for mental charms. The second sister, who was at school in a convent, induced her eldest sister to send for her to Versailles, with the fixed design of pleasing Louis in her turn, of ruling him, and of seizing the political character for which the gentle Mailli had not cared. Mademoiselle de Nesle succeeded in part: she seduced the King, and did not cause her sister to be sent away, but did much worse, — she shared him with her (1739). She became pregnant: the King married her, for form's sake, to the Marquis de Vintimille, the grand-nephew of the Archbishop of Paris. The

Digitized by Google

successor of the virtuous Noailles blessed the marriage without scruple. A third sister of the Nesles, who was married to the Duke de Lauraguais, was ere long associated with her two elder sisters! It seemed as if Louis could no longer know pleasure unless seasoned by incest.

The Regency had returned to Versailles without its wit and gayety. The moral effect of such examples is readily comprehended: as to the political consequences, they were not immediate. Fleuri had capitulated as to morality, but not as to economy: he defended his authority and his coffers with much address against the audacious Vintimille; and Louis, satisfied, provided that his aged preceptor spared him remonstrances on his debaucheries, turned a deaf ear to the insinuations of his mistress. Caring little for magnificence, and very indolent, he was not sorry that the cardinal interdicted him too great liberality, and rejected with dismay the idea of quitting the beaten track. The routine inaugurated in 1726 continued therefore to rule France, or rather to leave it to develop of itself in facts and ideas.

It is not yet time to speak of ideas: as to facts, they offered the most interesting and most novel spectacle, at least in an economic point of view. The arts and manufactures were flourishing in our towns, despite the fetters of regulations. Commerce, scarcely slackened a moment by a war without serious risk and purely continental, was pursuing its progress in the Mediterranean and the Levant, where France kept a decided preponderance,[1] and taking a great impulse in the direction of the East and West Indies, which the government had not instigated, and at which it was speedily dismayed. France was executing spontaneously the plans of Colbert and Law, and becoming too maritime to suit Fleuri, who would gladly have confined her within her frontiers. What transpired in this period of the eighteenth century is the best refutation of the deplorable prejudice born of our misfortunes, — that France is not fitted for maritime commerce, the only commerce that indefinitely extends the power of a nation with its sphere of activity.

The vast machinery of the Indian Company, freed from the wrecks of the System, was again set vigorously in motion. Whatever may be the abuses of exclusive companies and of all monopolies,

[1] By way of compensation, the French flag was almost unknown in the Baltic; and our commerce with Portugal, very flourishing before the War of the Spanish Succession, had declined since the Methwen treaty, and was replaced by the English commerce. — See Flassan, t. V. p. 108.

Digitized by Google

and whatever the force of the principle of commercial freedom, the commerce of the East Indies at that time, it must be admitted, was subject to such conditions that the isolated efforts of private individuals to carry it on would probably have failed. The greatness of the distance and the length of the voyages were not insurmountable obstacles: but the multiplicity of the elements with which it had to do; the necessity of great advances and of divers numerous risks, largely compensated for, and patiently pursued; the disorder and fickleness of all those Oriental governments on which a powerful association was alone capable of imposing some respect for engagements contracted and rights acquired, — seem to prove that the commerce of the Upper East could scarcely be carried on, except as a *body*, to use the expression of Law. The organic centre of this vast body was the new Breton town of Lorient (L'Orient). This dockyard of the first East-India Company under Colbert, a mere hamlet of eight or nine hundred souls in 1726, rapidly became a splendid city. The beautiful blue granites of Blavet and Scorff were transformed into imposing structures on those quays whence the East-India vessels sailed and returned periodically, more numerous and more richly freighted from year to year. The returns, which had been only two millions per annum from 1714 to 1719, before the reorganization of the company, amounted to eighteen millions from 1734 to 1736.[1] Our East-India factories, so long languishing, became resplendent with triumphant activity. A hundred thousand East-Indians took shelter under our flag at Pondicherry. Chandernagore increased rapidly. The Mascarene Islands, that station so well chosen between Africa and India, became, the one the Isle of Bourbon, a rich agricultural colony; the other the Isle of France, a naval post from which we ruled the Indian Ocean. By a happy scheme, which founded free trade on monopoly itself, while the company carried on exclusively the traffic of France with the East Indies and of the East Indies with France, the French traders and the agents of the company privately carried on the extensive coasting-trade among the Indies throughout the whole East, as far as China. The French ships multiplied, encouraged by success: the English and Dutch companies trembled with jealousy on seeing these new-comers hasten, with such ardor, to repair the time lost by France.

The honor of this great movement did not belong to the financiers at Paris who directed the Indian Company, any more than

[1] L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 202; Melon, p. 732.

Digitized by Google

to the aged head of the ministry or to the comptroller-general. The movement, wholly spontaneous, — the adventurous growth of France, — was personified in two men, who, posted, the one in the heart of India, at Chandernagore, on the Ganges, the other in the midst of the seas, in the Isle of France, did or taught others to do all that appeared new, useful, and bold. The moment has not yet come to set forth the labors, the glory, and the misfortunes of these two men, equal in daring and will, if not in character and genius, — of these men, both of whom Colbert would have employed for the greatness of the country, and whom the ministers of Louis XV. only knew how to oppose to each other, and to sacrifice one after the other. Let it suffice to announce here DUPLEIX and LA BOURDONNAIS. . . .

The American possessions were developing still more largely than the Indian factories. In America, the progress was not summed up in a few great men, as in the East Indies: the force of events sufficed there, since a man of genius, Law, had caused the removal of certain obstacles that fettered colonial production. The vast and frozen Canada formed an exception. Although its population had perceptibly increased since the time of Louis XIV., it was very far from receiving, in any respect, an impulse comparable to the English colonies of the continent, its southern neighbors. Louisiana, on the contrary, had begun to prosper, since the company, through want of knowing how to make it profitable, had ceded it back to the government in 1731, and since freedom of trade thither had succeeded the system by which the company reserved to itself all traffic with France, and prohibited all traffic with the neighboring foreign colonies. But the great interest, wealth, and life were with the brilliant sun and sparkling waters of the tropics, in the West Indies. France had won there by degrees, since 1717, a decisive and irresistible preponderance over England.

Under Colbert, the too numerous and too heavy duties;[1] the obligation imposed on vessels that trafficked between France and the West Indies to return to the same ports from which they had sailed, in order to prevent commerce between the colonies and foreign countries; lastly, and above all, the prohibition to reëxport the raw sugars brought from the West Indies to France, a prohibition that sacrificed colonial agriculture to the refiners' trade, — had

[1] A capitation-tax of a hundred pounds of raw sugar per head for each colonist, whether free or not; duties on tobacco, indigo, cocoa, cotton, etc. — See Rainal, *Hist. philosophique des deux Indes*, t. III. pp. 337–343, Geneva, 1780.

Digitized by Google

greatly lessened the effects of so many salutary measures due to the great minister. The production of sugar, which amounted, in 1682, to twenty-seven million pounds a year, while France consumed as yet only twenty millions, had naturally fallen off as soon as the foreign markets were closed; and, after Colbert, the bad administration and the increasing destitution in France had deprived the colonies of the compensation hoped for by Colbert from the increase of the internal market. The colonies had declined. Raw sugar, from fourteen or fifteen francs per quintal in 1682, had fallen to five or six francs in 1713. In 1696, the Island of Santa Cruz had been abandoned voluntarily. In 1698, there were not twenty thousand negroes in all the French West Indies, and fifty vessels of moderate tonnage sufficed for the commerce of the islands. From 1717, from the moment when the influence of Law began to sway public affairs, every thing changed. An important regulation freed from all duties French merchandise designed for the islands, greatly diminished the duties on merchandise from the islands destined for French consumption, authorized merchandise from the islands brought to France to be freely exported thence to foreign countries in consideration of a duty of three per cent, and laid a general tax on foreign sugars. Marseilles was admitted among the ports that enjoyed the privilege of American commerce, which opened the Mediterranean to our colonial commodities. The agriculture and commerce of the French West Indies progressed with giant strides. In 1740, French sugar had driven English sugar from all the European markets. The coffee of the French West Indies, a production quite recently borrowed from Dutch Guiana, had acquired an almost exclusive superiority. While the Spanish part of St. Domingo was languishing in stagnation, the French part, much smaller in extent, grew so rapidly, that it was equal in value, by itself alone, to all the English West Indies.[1] Martinique, which had not fifteen thousand negro laborers in 1700, numbered seventy-two thousand in 1736: it was overflowing with specie as with all kinds of paper. The general entrepôt of our *Windward Islands*, its ports received every year two hundred vessels from France, and thirty from Canada. Guadaloupe, which had begun to progress a little later, was aspiring to rival her rich and flourishing neighbor. They were the two queens of the Antilles, and the most productive of all the

[1] The southern coast of St. Domingo, from Pointe-à-Pître to Cape Tiburon, was under the jurisdiction of the Indian Company. It was the least wealthy part of the island, and the only part of the West Indies subject to monopoly.

Digitized by Google

American archipelago in proportion to their extent. The ports of France privileged to trade with America participated largely in this fruiful activity, the most evident profit from which reverted to their shipping-merchants. The sumptuous edifices with which the eighteenth century peopled Nantes, Marseilles, and, above all, the magnificent Bordeaux, now so fallen,[1] sufficiently attest the active and brilliant life of those days of prosperity.

We may sum up in a few words the progress of France: before Law, if we are to believe Voltaire, France possessed only three hundred trading-vessels; she had eighteen hundred in 1738![2]

If Colbert could have seen such a spectacle, what would have been his joy! But also with what indignation would he not have seen the navy abandoned, the old vessels of Tourville and Duguai-Trouin rotting in the silent docks before the empty arsenals, and the noble wrecks of our naval armies abandoned to forgetfulness or disdain![3]

When France had as yet very little maritime commerce to protect, she had had a magnificent navy: now that she had a vast commerce to protect, she was without a naval force.

Two perils menaced the maritime future of France, — the one imminent, which we have just indicated; the other remote, but which was destined to grow with the prosperity itself of our colonies, for it was the very foundation and basis of this prosperity; namely, slavery.[4]

A splendid present, an alarming future, — thus may be summed up the position of the manufacturing, commercial, and maritime France; of the urban France. The agricultural France, the great stagnant mass of the country districts, offered a very dif-

[1] Written in 1851. Bordeaux is beginning to revive.

[2] Of which sixty of from four hundred to eight hundred tons belonged to the company. — See Voltaire, *Guerre de* 1741, 1st edition, p. 28. There is probably some exaggeration in this. Melon (*Économistes financiers*, p. 732) says that the number of vessels for the American trade had more than doubled (about 1734): he falls short of the truth; Voltaire exceeds it. — See Rainal, t. III. liv. xiii.

[3] The heroic Cassart, of whom Duguai-Trouin said, "I would give all the deeds of my life for one of his," having too rudely demanded an old debt of *three millions*, advanced to the King on his prizes during the calamities of Louis XIV., had been thrown by the ministry into the fortress of Ham, where he died a captive in 1740. — See L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 219.

[4] A declaration of June 15, 1736, prohibited the emancipation of any slaves without the permission of the governor or the intendant of the colony. The Black Code was becoming harsher and harsher! — See *Anciennes Lois françaises* t. XXI. p. 419. Another declaration, of February 1, 1743, punished with death fugitive slaves taken with arms in their hands, or guilty of carrying off a canoe or boat: for an attempt to escape, they were hamstringed! — *Ibid.* t. XXII. p. 163.

Digitized by Google

ferent aspect, a lamentable contrast: its future was obscure, its present painful and bitter.

The economy of Fleuri had indeed sufficed to prevent a new bankruptcy (at least a general one, since Fleuri had his small, partial bankruptcy), and to reëstablish, within a few millions, a balance between the receipts and the expenditures, which would have become complete, had it not been for the war of 1733;[1] but it had not cured the inveterate ills of the rural population. The weight of the fatal system of taxation was becoming constantly more insupportable: the inertia of Fleuri was productive of as much harm in this respect as it had been productive of good to commerce. The despotism of the farmers and the fiscal agents of all kinds was uncurbed in the country districts. In proportion as the government became weaker at the centre, it became harsher and more iniquitous at the extremities: the intendants and their subordinates, commissioners of tax-lists, assessors of subsidies, etc., laughed at the regulations and the decrees of the council. The official amount of the taxation was exceeded by every species of exaction. Extortions, imprisonments, bailiffs stationed in the houses of tax-payers in arrears, arbitrary favors and punishments, were the habitual régime of the greater part of our generalities. The intendants, agents of order and unity under Richelieu and Colbert, and of severe and regulated despotism under Louvois, were no longer any thing, save honorable exceptions, but capricious pachas without the responsibility of the bowstring. The inertia of Fleuri was not entire, however, as regarded public burdens: he made an innovation on one point, and here his economy was an additional calamity. The trifling diminution granted in the villain-taxes was overbalanced by a new burden, by which the monarchy in its decline appropriated to itself the most oppressive tradition of feudalism, the obligation to road labor (the *corvée*). After the war of 1733, the government, having resolved to resume the work of the Regency with respect to the improvement of the national viability, opened new highways, repaired the old ones, ordered works of art to be executed at the expense of the State, and authorized the intendants to cause the rest of the

[1] Bailli (*Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 118) says, according to the *État au vrai manuscrit de* 1740, that the receipts in 1738 were one hundred and forty-eight, and the expenditures one hundred and forty-nine millions; but that, in 1740, the expenditures again exceeded the receipts sixteen millions. The *aggregate* receipts amounted to far more than one hundred and forty-eight millions; but the interest on the debt must be deducted.

Digitized by Google

works to be executed and kept in repair by means of men, wagons, and horses to be furnished by the inhabitants of the communes. There was on this subject no law, no decree of the council, no authentic act of the government. The impression that would be produced on the people by the solemn proclamation of the royal right to road labor was feared: this enormous burden was cunningly cast on the parishes contiguous to the highways by the intendants, who apportioned it as they pleased; and imprisonment, *not entered in the jail book*, punished the least resistance, the least delay.[1]

The result of so many abuses was a wretchedness, the terrible picture of which the Marquis d'Argenson has left us in his Memoirs.[2] The years 1738–1740 were disastrous to the peasantry. Under that ministry, cited by historians as an epoch of happy tranquillity, and at least of material comfort, "men were dying, as thick as flies, of poverty, and browsing grass;" and this without any marked dearths, except in 1740, a sterile year throughout Europe, and despite the precautions taken by the government to secure supplies.[3] The eastern and western provinces were the most hardly dealt with; but the distress reached even to the faubourgs of Paris. One day in September, 1739, as the King was passing through the Faubourg Saint-Victor on his way to his new house at Choisy, the accustomed scene of his amours, the people gathered together, and cried, no longer, "Long live the King!" but "*Want, famine, and bread!*" At the end of 1740, it was regarded as a certainty that the public wealth had diminished one-sixth within the year; and D'Argenson affirms that "more Frenchmen had died of want during the last two years than had been slain in all the wars of Louis XIV."[4] Admitting

[1] Bailli, t. II. pp. 117, 159, 164.

[2] Pages 322–331; 1825.

[3] A declaration of April 3, 1736, had ordered all the communes to supply themselves with grain for three years. A great storehouse for Paris was established at the Salpetrière.

[4] He pretends that the wealth and the population had begun to decrease from the ministry of *Monsieur le Duc* (p. 322). There is doubtless some exaggeration in D'Argenson: but we cannot let pass without refutation the opposite exaggeration of an assertion of M. de Carné in his recent apology for Dubois; namely, that the population of France had *almost doubled*, owing to the pacific policy of Dubois and Fleuri. The population of France was, according to the Memoirs of the intendants, nearly nineteen million souls about 1700. Suppose that it lost two or three millions even, in the War of the Spanish Succession, — reduce it to sixteen millions in 1713, which is reducing it a great deal, too much assuredly. Before the calamitous years 1738–1740, — about 1736, according to Melon, a well-informed contemporary economist, — it was about twenty million souls (*Économistes financiers*, etc., p. 800): if we increase the

Digitized by Google

that the kind heart of D'Argenson led him to overload his colors, the reality still remains very lugubrious.

The Cardinal de Fleuri had neither known how, nor been willing, to employ in any reforms[1] the intervals of peace and tranquillity accorded to France. He had only known how to live from day to day, like a selfish old man who wished for nothing but to surround his old age with silence at any price: he had stupefied France with soporifics instead of laboring to cure her. He did not even know how, as we are about to see, to prolong this sleep and silence until he himself had fallen into his last slumber.

estimate of Melon somewhat, we shall still fall far short of the number; and, after 1738, the population decreased anew. The royal right to road labor did more harm than the war. — See the new edition of D'Argenson, t. III. pp. 290–292.

[1] The Comptroller-General Orri had caused the resumption of the studies commenced under the Regency for the establishment of the *tariffed villain-tax*, according to the plan of the Abbé de Saint-Pierre; but all this ended in nothing.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

CLOSE OF FLEURI'S MINISTRY.—GOVERNMENT OF LOUIS XV.—WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

SECTION I.—CLOSE OF FLEURI'S MINISTRY.—WAR WITH AUSTRIA.—War of Russia and Austria against Turkey. Mediation of France. Intervention in Corsica. War between England and Spain. Accession of FREDERICK THE GREAT in Prussia. Death of the Emperor, Charles VI. Accession of MARIA THERESA in Austria. Coalition between France, Bavaria, Prussia, Spain, and Saxony, against the Austrian Heiress. Conquest of Silesia by the Prussians. Invasion of Upper Austria and Bohemia. The Elector of Bavaria elected Emperor. Maria Theresa arouses the Hungarians and Slavonians of the Upper Danube in a Body, and recovers Upper Austria and Bohemia. Death of Fleuri. SECTION II.—LOUIS XV.—WAR WITH AUSTRIA, CONTINUATION AND END.—The King resolves not to choose a Prime Minister. Anarchy in the Council. England, Holland, and Sardinia succor Austria. Invasion of Bavaria by the Austro-Hungarians. Battle of Dettingen. Invasion of Belgium by the French. Alsace invaded by the Austro-Hungarians. Madame de Châteauroux. Illness of the King. The Austrians repulsed. Accession of Madame de Pompadour. Victory of Fontenoy. The King of Prussia withdraws from the French Alliance. Conquest of Milanais, Parma, and a Part of Piedmont, by the Franco-Spaniards. D'Argenson, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, resumes the Projects of Chauvelin for the Independence of Italy. D'Argenson's Views concerning Poland, and concerning French Policy in general. Secret Treaty with Sardinia. Breaking-off of the Treaty, and Dismission of D'Argenson by the King. The Italian Conquests lost anew. Invasion of Provence by the Austro-Piedmontese. Revolt of Genoa against the Austrians. Provence liberated. Victory of Raucoux. Belgium conquered. War in America and India. Loss of Louisburg. LA BOURDONNAIS at the Isle of France. DUPLEIX in India. Great Designs of Dupleix trammelled by the Incapacity of the Ministers. Capture of Madras from the English. Misfortunes of La Bourdonnais. Triumphant Defence of Pondicherry against the English by Dupleix. Ruin of the French Navy. Invasion of the Dutch Territory. Victory of Lawfeld. Capture of Maestricht. Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Reciprocal Restitution of Conquests, with the Exception of Silesia, Parma, and a Portion of Milanais ceded by Austria.

1739–1748.

SECTION I.—CLOSE OF FLEURI'S MINISTRY. WAR WITH AUSTRIA.

1739–1748.

ALL Europe did not enjoy the tranquillity reëstablished by the Vienna compromise. The war, scarcely extinguished on the Rhine, the Po, and the waters of Sicily, was violently rekindled on the Danube and the Black Sea. Russia, animated by her suc-

Digitized by Google

cess in Poland, and directed, under the Czarina Anne, by the able foreign generals and administrators bequeathed to her by Peter the Great, deemed the moment come to take vengeance on the Ottomans for her defeat at Pruth (in 1711). Austria hoped to indemnify herself, at the expense of the Porte, for the losses she had just sustained in Italy. The plan of a coalition was agreed upon between the two Christian empires and the Mahometan rival of Turkey, Persia, resuscitated by the formidable Thamas Kouli Khan, who caused himself to be proclaimed sovereign of Persia, meanwhile, under the name of Nadir Shah (June, 1736).[1] The Khan of the Crimean Tartars had made an expedition, in 1734, to Kabardah and Daghestan, to assist the Mahometan tribes of the Caucasus against the Russians. The Czarina, under this pretext, declared war against the Sultan. The Russians, in May, 1736, forced the lines of Perekop, invaded the Crimea, and recaptured Azof (July 1). This beginning seemed to presage to the Ottoman Empire the greatest danger that it had ever run: happily for it, the triple alliance concerted did not take place. Nadir Shah chose rather to fall upon the rich countries of India, and made a separate peace with the Turks (September, 1736). As to Austria, she was not ready until 1737. The two Christian empires still believed themselves quite sufficient to overthrow Turkey; but the event contradicted all the prognostications. The Austrian government had deluded itself concerning its forces, and, above all, concerning the use that it was capable of making of them. Prince Eugene, who had been not only the great general, but the great administrator, of Austria, was no more (he had died April 20, 1736). The councils of the feeble and mediocre Charles VI. were full of discord. The finances were in confusion. The army, very incomplete, had lost its best soldiers in Italy. The two or three generals of merit that remained to Austria were thwarted and paralyzed by the unintelligent instructions of the cabinet of Vienna. The Austrian army, instead of repairing to Wallachia to combine its movements with

[1] Russia had already made concessions to Turkey by restoring to her Astrabad, Mazanderan, and Ghilan; and by again making the line of the Koor, and the outlet of the Aras into the Caspian Sea, the Russian frontier. She had renounced distant, costly, and waste possessions; but she retained the southern declivity of the Caucasus, the famous *iron gates*, and the facility of making another descent on Persia whenever she chose. Persia had purchased these restitutions by granting permission to Russian merchants to trade with Persia, and to go from Persia to India without paying any duties (February 13, 1729–January 21, 1732). — *Supplément au Corps diplomatique*, by Dumont, t. II. part ii. pp. 250–326.

Digitized by Google

those of the Russians who were to attack by the way of Bessarabia, and to place the Turks between two fires, exhausted itself in carrying on sieges in Servia and Bosnia. The Russians, after taking Otchakov, not without great sacrifices, had paused when they saw that the Austrians were not advancing towards them. The campaign of 1738 was much more unfortunate for Austria. The Grand Vizier recovered almost all of Servia, and took Orsova, after forcing back on Belgrade the Imperial army commanded by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Emperor's son-in-law (July–August, 1738). The Turks, inured to war by their struggles with Persia, showed an order and firmness that had not been seen among them from time immemorial. The peril of their empire had aroused their fanatical courage; and, though they had rejected European civilization under the illustrious and unfortunate Ibrahim, they accepted something of its military spirit under the Pacha Bonneval, who ruled in the name of the new Grand Vizier.

The Russians had obtained some successes, but without being able to complete the conquest of the Crimea, or to penetrate into Bessarabia. The Turks had well defended themselves everywhere. In the fourth campaign (1739), the Russians, passing through the south of Poland, invaded Moldavia; but, meanwhile, the Turks won a decisive victory over the Austrians at Grotzka, and besieged Belgrade (July, 1739), which the Emperor had made, since the peace of Passarowitz, the bulwark of Hungary. The cabinet of Vienna was seized with terror: the Emperor hastened to invoke the intervention of the French ambassador at Constantinople, Villeneuve, who was at the camp of the Grand Vizier with power to mediate, given him by the three belligerent powers. The advantages of the Russians in Moldavia, and, above all, the fear that Nadir Shah, the conqueror of Mogul, would fall back on Turkey in Asia, determined the Turks to grant peace at the price of enormous concessions. Austria restored Belgrade with the great territories that she had wrested from the Ottoman Empire by the treaty of Passarowitz, ceded Orsova, and dismantled Mehadia, which reopened to the Turks the *bannat* of Temesvar. The peace of Belgrade (September 18, 1739) was, so far as Austria was concerned, an admirable triumph of French diplomacy: unfortunately, it was not altogether the same with regard to Russia. The Emperor had endeavored to repair his honor in some degree by binding the French mediator to stipulate for his ally as for himself.[1] Villeneuve had, therefore, promised that Russia

[1] A secret article of the treaty of 1725 between Austria and Russia pledged them

Digitized by Google

should destroy Azof, the territory of which was to be left waste and neutral, restore the greater part of her other conquests, and renounce the navigation of the Black Sea; and that Kabardah should be independent. The conditions did not appear brilliant. The Czarina Anne, nevertheless, ratified them, despite General Münnich, who wished to rouse the Greeks and all the Christian subjects to insurrection against the Porte. Sweden was on the point of uniting with the Turks; Poland was restless, and the plots among the Russian nobility against the administration of the Germans rendered the Czarina uneasy: moreover, an act of negligence or a fatal concession of the French mediator gave Russia a negative advantage, the scope of which was comprehended by the cabinet of St. Petersburg. The article of the treaty of Pruth which prohibited Russia from interfering in the affairs of Poland was not renewed in the treaty of Belgrade; and the guarantee given by Turkey to Polish independence — a guarantee which subsisted in right, although Turkey had been unable of late to make it respected in fact — was thus set aside. Villeneuve made a second mistake in not causing Sweden to be included in the treaty. This was rather the fault of his government than his own. Since Chauvelin's disgrace, French policy had fluctuated without guidance; and each diplomatic agent, no longer receiving instructions attaching him to any general plan, saw nothing beyond the corner of the horizon where he chanced to find himself.[1]

The issue of this war produced a lively impression on the public mind. The respective situation of the powers of Eastern Europe was considerably modified. Russia, under the iron discipline of the German Münnich,[2] had retrieved the glory of her arms with respect to the Turks, and won a great diplomatic advantage; the Ottoman Empire had effaced the humiliating defeats of 1717 and 1718, and proved to Europe that its dismemberment would not be easy; Austria, fallen from the glorious reverses of Lombardy to the shameful reverses of the Danube, had lost her reputation, and given rise to the opinion that her empire was hastening to its

to a perpetual alliance against Turkey, and bound them never to make a separate peace.

[1] Wenck, t. I. pp. 316–413; Rulhière, *Anarchie de Pologne*, t. I. pp. 153–160; Coxe, *Maison d'Autriche*, ch. xcii.–xciv.

[2] The general officers, for the most trifling faults, were chained to the cannon, and thus dragged along for long marches. The soldiers feigning illness to avoid advancing through the sandy deserts that separate Russia from Turkey, Münnich forbade them to be sick *under pain of being buried alive*. — Rulhière, p. 156.

Digitized by Google

ruin, — an opinion destined to exercise considerable influence on the resolutions of the cabinets and the succeeding events.

A defensive treaty, arranged by France, between Turkey and Sweden, repaired the omission of Villeneuve (December 22, 1739), who obtained, a few months after, concessions from the Porte extremely advantageous to French commerce. The ancient *capitulations* were renewed and amplified, no longer in the form of favors condescendingly granted from the Ottoman throne, but in that of a true commercial treaty, which continues to be at the present day the basis of our intercourse. The duty of five per cent, paid by merchandise coming from or destined to France, was reduced to three per cent, except for merchandise designed to be reëxported to Russia or elsewhere (May 28, 1740).[1] Never had France obtained such an ascendency at Constantinople, thanks to Bonneval, who had resumed the work of the unfortunate Ibrahim, with more circumspection towards the prejudices of Islamism. Never would our whole diplomatic situation have been better, had we had a government capable of profiting by it.

The aged French minister, urged on by that need of action which existed everywhere in France except in him and his royal pupil, was drawn into intervention in divers questions contemporary with the war on the Danube. The French mediation in 1738 pacified Geneva, agitated by the quarrels of the democracy and the bourgeois patriciate. France effected by arms, in another discussion, an intervention destined to have important consequences in the future. The tyranny exercised by the Genoese over their Corsican subjects, whom they excluded from all office, and made subservient to their profit by harsh fiscal measures, had in all times excited frequent rebellions, which would have inevitably overthrown the Genoese rule, had the Corsicans been capable of agreeing among themselves. This singular population had preserved, and still preserves in great part, the manners and customs, not of the antique Italian cities, but of the petty primitive tribes, so far as these manners and customs had any thing in common with the Gauls and Germans on the one hand, and the Arabs and Moors on the other. The eternal private feuds, the inveterate family hatreds, explain why so intrepid a race had not succeeded in throwing off the yoke of its masters. In the eighteenth century, however, the political spirit having made some progress in this people, and raised up

[1] Wenck, t. I. p. 528. In 1729, Tunis had restored to France her ancient commercial privileges over other nations; among others, the exclusive right to the coral fishery. — *Supplément au Corps diplomatique*, by Dumont, t. II. p. 249.

Digitized by Google

some remarkable men, the insurrections were renewed with more unity, and the Genoese saw themselves rendered powerless to subdue the rebellion by their own strength. In 1729, they solicited troops from the Emperor: in 1730, the Corsicans, on their side, addressed themselves to France, and offered to recognize the protectorate, or even the sovereignty, of Louis XV.[1] Fleuri refused. In 1732, the commander of the Imperial troops at Corsica induced both masters and subjects to accept a compromise guaranteed by the Emperor, but speedily violated by the Genoese after the departure of the Imperialists. The war was rekindled, and the attention of Europe began to be turned to this point of the Mediterranean: it was very important to know what would become of this island, rich in harbors, timber, and, above all, courageous men, and which commanded the maritime basin between Spain, France, and Upper Italy.

In 1736, a German baron named Theodore de Neuhoff landed in Corsica with money, arms, and munitions, which, he pretended, had been sent by the Bey of Tunis; promised much greater aid; and fascinated the insurgents to such a degree, that they proclaimed him King of Corsica. The French government soon perceived, from certain indications, that this adventurer had been instigated by Holland, who was herself only the instrument of England. The two maritime powers aspired in common to the protectorate of Corsica, which would have been almost exclusively to the advantage of the stronger of the two, — the one that already held Gibraltar and Mahon. The cabinet of Versailles concerted in this juncture with the cabinet of Vienna, which bore ill-will to the maritime powers for their abandonment during the war of 1733, and which, being no longer in a position to interfere in Corsica, consented for France to do so. By a treaty of July 27, 1737, France promised Genoa a large body of auxiliary troops in consideration of a subsidy. The maritime powers, not openly supporting *King Theodore*, could not regard the descent of the French in Corsica as an act of hostility; but the Corsicans thought it very hard that the power to which they had offered themselves should assist their tyrants in overpowering them (February, 1738). In truth, an amnesty, with considerably extended privileges for the Corsicans, was at first issued under the form of an agreement between the Emperor and France; but the Corsicans were required to surrender their arms to the Genoese. They refused, and

[1] Flassan, t. V. p. 49.

Digitized by Google

for a whole year defended themselves heroically, from mountain to mountain, from *maquis* to *maquis* (marshy thickets), against ten thousand French troops. King Theodore quitted Corsica to seek resources abroad. The principal leaders, conquered by famine rather than by arms, at last consented, by a capitulation, to exile themselves; and peace was reëstablished in the island in the autumn of 1739. The French quitted Corsica in the course of 1740. The result of this departure, very inopportune in every respect, was that the Genosee transgressed the compact of 1738 quite as much as that of 1732, and that the Corsicans, repressed, but not resigned, soon had new grievances to avenge.[1]

The evacuation of Corsica had been designed, in Fleuri's mind, to prevent the complaints of Walpole concerning French ambition, and to extenuate the extremely grave conduct with respect to England, into which he had been hurried by the force of circumstances and of public opinion.

The fermentation that agitated Europe was continually causing some new outbreak. The moment that the war ended between Turkey and the Austro-Russians, it broke out between Spain and England on account of American commerce.

The principles of reserved navigation and exclusive commerce that ruled Spanish America were the same in all the colonial States: but the other nations provided for their distant possessions, however indifferently; while Spain was absolutely unable to supply the necessities of her vast colonial empire. The industrial and commercial decline of Spain had had a twofold result with respect to her colonies. On the one hand, the foreign merchants, not being permitted to traffic directly with Spanish America, did so through the medium of the merchants of Cadiz, become simple factors, and under the Spanish flag: on the other, this regular commerce, fettered by innumerable restrictions, being far from sufficient for the wants of the Hispano-Americans, an extensive contraband trade was established between the Spanish colonies, the West-India colonies of other nations, and the shipping-merchants of Europe. The regular trade was carried on chiefly by the French; the contraband trade, chiefly by the English.[2] Tolerated formerly under the last kings of the House of Austria, who had stood in need of the English alliance, it had continued to in-

[1] C. Botta, *Storia d'Italia*, t. XLII.; *Mém. historique sur la Corse*, by Joussin, 1759, 2 vols. 12mo.

[2] Our West-India Islands, however, did not fail to enter into it; and Martinique made thereby three millions annually. — See Rainal, t. III. liv. xii.-xiv.

Digitized by Google

crease under Philip V., but no longer with the same tolerance. Alberoni, Ripperda, and José Patiño, had successively labored to revive the marine and commerce of Spain, and to repress foreign speculation.[1] Under Patiño, the strictest instructions had been given to stop the landing of the smugglers in America, which was very legitimate; and, which was much less so, to search suspicious vessels, even on the high seas. This soon grew into actual warfare between the Spanish guarda-costas and the English interlopers. The most atrocious acts of violence were committed on both sides. During several sessions, the English parliament resounded with the clamors of commerce against the pretended *right of search*. The irritation continued to increase in Great Britain. Robert Walpole restrained the movement as far as possible: he concluded an agreement with the cabinet of Madrid, by which Spain promised some indemnity to the shipping-merchants injured (January 14, 1739). But this indemnity was not paid, Spain, on her side, laying claim to compensation; and the squadrons sent by the English minister to the coast of Spain did not raise the kind of blockade that they maintained there. Walpole, borne down by the torrent of public opinion, yielded. Letters of reprisals were delivered to English privateers in August, 1739.[2] Spain replied by an embargo. England declared war (October 30, 1739). The English nation, weary of its prolonged peace, and intoxicated with pride and ambition, fancied that it saw a magnificent and easy prey in the Spanish colonies. As early as December 1, 1739, the capture of Porto Bello — the harbor from which the Mexican galleons were accustomed to sail — by Admiral Vernon seemed to presage greater conquests.

Spain claimed the advantage of her defensive alliance with France. It is easy to judge what was Fleuri's anxiety. The public clamor was as great in France for the defence of Spain as in England for an attack on her; and the new tie which at that very moment united the two branches of the Bourbons — the marriage of the eldest daughter of Louis XV. to the youngest son of

[1] "I remark, *with great displeasure*, the progress made by Patiño in his plan of rendering the Spanish marine powerful." — Letter from the English Ambassador Keene, Madrid, August 23, 1728. Elsewhere, this same English envoy complains naïvely of the *wickedness* of Patiño, who "seeks only to reform all measures that he believes prejudicial to Spain." — Letter of November 25, 1731, ap. Coxe, *Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, ch. lxii.

[2] Four galleons, for which the English were watching, arrived safely at Saint-André with forty-three millions' worth of freight, twenty-five millions of which belonged to French merchants. — *Annales politiques*, by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, t. II. p. 662.

Digitized by Google

Philip V. and Elizabeth Farnese (August 26, 1739) — rendered the King favorable to the entreaties of the cabinet of Madrid. Paternal instinct was the only family virtue in Louis XV. Fleuri would have gladly rendered the auxiliary part of France as modest as possible until he could secure the acceptance of his mediation; but he was absolutely compelled to fit out a naval force. He did so reluctantly, and in a niggardly manner: it was impossible, moreover, to repair in a few months twenty-five years of neglect, and there was no Colbert at hand to construct vessels as if by magic. At the death of Louis XIV., the royal marine was already on the decline. The census of 1713 had enumerated ninety-two thousand four hundred and fifty sailors, cabin-boys included; but nothing was done with this valuable *personnel:* scarcely one-fifth of the officers were employed, and half the vessels had rotted in the harbors. Louis XIV., in his last days, had neglected the marine through powerlessness: the inheritors of his power sacrificed it through system. The Regency consummated the ruin of the *matériel.* The marine of Louis XIV. had cost twenty-five millions a year during the war of 1688; fourteen millions from 1698 to 1700; twenty-two millions during the War of the Succession; seventeen millions from 1713 to 1715 (these seventeen millions were worth much less than a like sum in 1688, in consequence of the changes in the coin). The marine of the Regency cost only eight millions a year, and Noailles had wished to reduce it to four. From sixty-six ships of the line that remained in 1715, the number had decreased, in 1719, to forty-nine; then continued to diminish. At the close of the Regency, according to the plan of the Admiral Count de Toulouse, it had been projected to fix the naval status at fifty ships, of from sixty-four to one hundred guns: *Monsieur le Duc* fixed it much lower, — at fifty-four ships and large frigates. But even this number was nominal, and the greater part of the vessels were not in a condition to put to sea without great repairs. England, on her side, at the opening of the war with Spain, had ninety ships of the line completed or far advanced, fifty of which were ready for sea; and fifty-two large frigates, of from forty to fifty guns, which could be repaired and put to sea in a few months. Spain had nominally fifty ships of the line, of which twenty-four were afloat. Holland, the ancient rival of England, was reduced to forty, of which twenty-five were afloat. The French cabinet had little difficulty in determining the neutrality of this power, which was declining from day to day.[1] Fleuri would have gladly

[1] *Mémoire au roi sur la marine de France,* by the Count de Toulouse (1724), ap. *Mém.*

Digitized by Google

done himself what he counselled the Dutch to do: nevertheless, October 7, 1740, he reluctantly signed the order to despatch to Spain a fleet of twenty-two ships, which he had succeeded in fitting out, and which convoyed to America the Spanish fleet assembled at Ferrol. The English, detained by contrary winds, having been unable to prevent this junction, did not deem themselves in a condition to attack the combined fleets. Fleuri had protested to the Walpoles that his master did not design to break with England: he still hoped with their aid to lessen the shock, and to bring about a compromise.[1] This ill-founded hope resulted, as we shall see, in deplorable consequences to our maritime interests, and prevented measures from being taken which would have secured to us, from the beginning of the war, a decided superiority in the Eastern seas.

The English did not seriously renew their attack on Spanish America until 1741, after the departure of the French fleet; but, during the interval, a Continental crisis of far more importance than the commercial quarrel in America had broken out in Europe.

May 31, 1740, the King of Prussia, Frederick William, had died, leaving the throne to his son, Frederick II. Frederick William, an inconceivable mixture of organizing qualities, and cynical, extravagant, and ferocious brutality, had passed for a maniac abroad, but nevertheless had paved the way for the future of that Prussia founded by his grandfather, the Great Elector, and decorated with the royal title by his father. His coarseness and sordid economy had been at once a thing of nature and of calculation. His father, a lover of pomp and pleasure, had expended the small revenues of the new kingdom in procuring for himself a brilliant, literary, and artistic court. Frederick William judged that it was necessary to choose between show and real strength; and, to create strength, he sacrificed all else. Every thing was immolated to the creation of an army, and the accumulation of a treasury that would serve, in case of need, to put this army in motion. Frederick William had well understood, that, to have an army, it was necessary to have a people; and he favored the increase of the population by clearing lands in the country, building houses in the towns, and offering privileges to the inhabitants of other countries of Germany who

de Villette, p. 62; Lémontei, *Hist. de la Régence*, t. II. p. 282; Sainte-Croix, *Hist. de la puissance navale de l'Angleterre*, t. II. p. 187; W. Coxe, *l'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, ch. xliv.; Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I., Introduction.

[1] Flassan, t. V. p. 191.

Digitized by Google

might come to settle in Prussia: then, this increase progressing too slowly to recruit the masses of troops desired by the Prussian monarch, he sent out his crimps through all Germany, and well-nigh through all Europe: it was a genuine *white-slave trade*, a genuine brigandage. He thus procured an army of seventy-six thousand men, of whom twenty-six thousand were foreigners, and a treasury of twenty-six millions.[1] A great *military mechanician* (to use the expression of Frederick II.), the Prince of Anhalt, introduced among the Prussian infantry an unexampled discipline, order, and precision of movements, and made modifications in tactics, the consequences of which were not destined to appear until after Frederick William, who transmitted to his son his troops and his treasury intact, having made use of neither.

The new King was twenty-eight years of age. He was known as yet only by his opposition to his father, who had been on the point of following the sinister example of Peter the Great in an inverse direction, and immolating civilization in Frederick as Peter had immolated barbarism in the Czarowitz Alexis. Frederick had as yet shown himself only as the friend of letters, sciences, arts, and pleasures; or rather the literary man and artist, enamoured with the French language, manners, and new ideas, writing and thinking only in French; the young philosopher and philanthropist, employed, it was said, on a refutation of Machiavel, and the intimate correspondent of the great writer of France, Voltaire. In the flash of his blue eye, by turns so laughing and so harsh, in his close-shut and often-contracted lips, in his features so strongly and clearly marked, there might nevertheless have been already discerned another man hidden beneath the first, — the true Frederick, the man of action, the warrior, and the politician. It was expected that he would reduce his father's army, excessive for a State of two million two hundred and forty thousand souls. He began by increasing it.[2]

[1] The annual revenue of the crown of Prussia scarcely exceeded twenty-two millions. — Frederick II., *Histoire de Mon Temps*, ap. *Œuvres Posthumes*, t. I. p. 25; Berlin, 1788.

[2] France, nine times more populous, with a net revenue of nearly a hundred and fifty millions, kept on foot only a hundred and sixty-six thousand men, including militia. Frederick II., in the *History of My Times*, gives a curious picture of the state of the revenues and the military forces of all the European powers on a peace footing in 1740. Austria, all of whose corps were incomplete, had only eighty-two thousand men on foot: her revenue, partly pledged, was about sixty millions. Spain had a revenue of seventy-two millions, heavily encumbered, and nearly sixty thousand soldiers. England had, in times of peace, the same revenue as Spain, but susceptible of being doubled, and even tripled, in case of war. She had at home thirty thousand soldiers;

Digitized by Google

October 20, 1740, another death took place, which produced a much more lively impression in Europe than the death of the King of Prussia. The Emperor Charles VI., whose health had been deranged by chagrin for his late reverses, was carried off, at fifty-five, by the effects of a fit of indigestion. This inglorious catastrophe put an end, after four and a half centuries of splendor, to that House of Austria-Hapsburg that had long aspired to the monarchy of Europe. With the marriage of the eldest daughter of Charles VI., Maria Theresa, to Francis of Lorraine, Grand Duke of Tuscany, commenced the second House of Austria, — the House of Austria-Lorraine. All the foreign sovereigns, except the princes of the House of Bavaria, having sanctioned the law of succession promulgated by the defunct monarch, a law accepted by all the official organs of the Austrian States, there was no room for the cabinets to contest, by right, the transmission of the inheritance. There was, by right, no other point in question than that of the election to the Empire. Charles VI. had not dared attempt to resolve this during his lifetime by making his son-in-law the King of the Romans: the articles to which he had sworn on receiving the Imperial crown were opposed to it; and he would have found adversaries strong enough to constrain him to observe his engagements. By right, there was, therefore, only a single point in question; but, in fact, every thing was in dispute. Prince Eugene well knew this, — he who had told the Emperor so often, and who again repeated it in dying, — that two hundred thousand good soldiers would better insure the inheritance than all the *guarantees* in the world.

In 1740, as lately in 1733, a solemn question was propounded: What was France to do? — to redeem the promise given by the Great King in 1714 to the House of Bavaria, and to secure the transferral of the Empire to the son of the faithful and unfortunate ally of Louis XIV.? This was so evident, that no one at Versailles raised any doubt with respect to it. But afterwards? —

and thirty-four thousand Hanoverians, Hessians, and Danes were at her disposal in Germany, in consideration of subsidies. The population of the British Islands was as yet only about eight million souls. Holland had two million inhabitants, thirty thousand soldiers, and thirty-six millions of revenue; Denmark, thirty-six thousand soldiers exclusive of the militia, twenty-seven ships of the line, and less than seventeen millions of revenue; Sweden, two million souls, twelve millions of revenue, only seven thousand soldiers, thirty-three thousand regular militia, and twenty-four ships; Russia, a hundred and seventy thousand men (of whom ninety-two thousand were regular soldiers), twelve vessels, from forty-two to forty-five millions of revenue, and twelve million inhabitants (the number is too small).

Digitized by Google

to observe purely and simply the Pragmatic Sanction, much too lightly promised? This was almost impossible. The Elector of Bavaria claimed the whole inheritance by virtue of a family compact which dated back to the Emperor Ferdinand I., the brother of Charles V.[1] He had despatched a protest to Vienna, as early as October 3, against the accession of Maria Theresa. Was it possible to support his nomination to the Empire without supporting his other pretensions, at least so far as was necessary to give him the means of supporting the Imperial dignity?[2] The King of Spain was already retracting his guarantee, and protesting on his side (November). He was disposed to demand Hungary and Bohemia, as representing the rights of the elder branch of Austria to these kingdoms, by the terms of a compact between Ferdinand II. and Philip III.; and aimed at obtaining Lombardy in exchange. The Elector of Saxony, King of Poland, and the King of Sardinia, were also preparing to put forth claims. The pretensions of the Saxon, the husband of the eldest daughter of the Emperor Joseph I., would have been the most specious of all, had he had the character and power to enforce them. What, then, was to be done? To demand of Maria Theresa some sacrifices in Germany and Italy, the Austrian domains of Swabia for the Elector of Bavaria, Parma for the youngest of the Infants of Spain, and a new shred of Milanais for the King of Sardinia; and to renew at this price the guarantee of the succession, and maintain the peace of Europe. This course would not have been so great as the plans of Chauvelin in 1735: nevertheless, it would have still been glorious; it would have continued the policy of the treaty of Westphalia, and have insured the European preponderance of France, probably without striking a blow. Austria would have been humiliated; yet France would still have appeared generous to her. This is what Chauvelin, doubtless, would have done; but he was in exile at Bourges; and Fleuri, who was verging on his eighty-eighth year, was more incapable than ever of the decision of thought, and firmness of action, that would have been needed to decide on such a plan, and to execute it without deviation.

There was another course possible, — to trample upon the en-

[1] The Elector gave a forced interpretation to this compact. The reversion was promised to his house only in case of the extinction of all legitimate posterity.

[2] Secret treaties of February 2, 1714, November 12, 1727, November 15, 1733, and May 16, 1738, had explicitly promised to Bavaria the assistance of France in case of the extinction of the male descendants of Austria. The treaty of France with Austria was, therefore, broken in advance. — See Garden, t. III. p. 255.

Digitized by Google

gagements contracted with the defunct Emperor, and to profit by the opportunity to dismember the Austrian monarchy. This was seductive: it seemed the consummation of the work of Henri IV. and Richelieu. But then it would have been necessary to throw all the forces of France at once into the scale, and openly to take the head of the coalition so easily formed against the heiress of the Hapsburgs. The moral question, the fidelity to treaties, was not what arrested Fleuri: he believed the guarantee of France void — he said so at least — because Charles VI. had not accomplished the promise of securing from the Germanic Diet the guarantee to France of the acquisition of Lorraine;[1] but he was not the man to accept the idea that has just been indicated, openly presented in all its boldness. Those who wished to inculcate this idea on him disguised it from him. At the head of the war party was the grandson of Fouquet, the Count de Belle-Isle, who saw the moment come to attain with éclat an ambitious aim long pursued by secret intrigues. "A too powerful lady," says Voltaire,[2] supported Belle-Isle with the King: the only ambitious one among the mistresses of Louis XV., Madame de Vintimille, saw in the affairs of Austria the means of overthrowing the system, and perhaps the person, of Fleuri. The aged cardinal permitted the appointment of Belle-Isle to the functions of plenipotentiary to the Electoral Diet, which was about to assemble at Frankfort, and to all the princes of Germany, to be extorted from him (November, 1740). The first instructions regarded only the promotion of the Elector of Bavaria to the Empire. As it was impossible to stop there, and as Fleuri had no plan concerning what might follow, Belle-Isle deemed himself thenceforth master of the situation.

The first weeks that followed the death of the Emperor had been filled by a warfare of the pen between the Elector of Bavaria and Maria Theresa, who entitled herself the Queen of Hungary and Bohemia. The Bavarians were not in a condition to act otherwise than by manifestoes. The other claimants were intriguing at Versailles, whence they expected the signal. This signal was given, not by the court of France, but by a prince who acted before speaking. The young King of Prussia cast an eagle glance over the Austrian domains and his own estates, and

[1] See letter of Fleuri to Frederick II., January 25, 1741, in *l'Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I. p. 145. This was unimportant; for the Emperor had received from the Diet powers in due form to negotiate.

[2] *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. v.

Digitized by Google

saw that the decisive moment had come for his kingdom and himself; and that, if he did not do now that for which his father had paved the way, he would never do it. He saw the Prussian monarchy formed of fragments scattered through the vast space extending from the Niemen to the Meuse: at the east, ancient ducal Prussia; at the centre, Brandenburg, with Prussian Pomerania, Magdeburg, and Halberstadt; at the west, the two little duchies of Geldern and Cleves. Where should he begin to join together these shreds, to round off and condense this narrow and disjointed belt? It was expected that Frederick II. would direct his ambition towards the duchies of Berg and Jülich. These duchies, more important than Cleves and Geldern, would soon fall vacant by the death of the aged Elector Palatine, who had no direct heirs. The House of Brandenburg claimed the reversion, and had received, with respect to Berg, the explicit promise of the late Emperor, in exchange for the guarantee given by Frederick William to the Pragmatic Sanction. Frederick II. could, therefore, after the example of what had transpired in Tuscany and Parma, lay claim to the preliminary occupation of the promised domain; but this would have caused a collision with France, who was unwilling to see Prussia join Berg and Jülich to Cleves and Geldern, and thus extend itself between the Rhine and the Meuse on Gallic territory. They would not, besides, have really added to the strength of Prussia: they were too far from its centre. Frederick had only to cast his eyes on his archives to find old claims far more advantageous: the House of Brandenburg had rights over a portion of Silesia that had formerly been wrested from it by Austria, — Silesia, the great valley of the Upper Oder, a possession so valuable in itself, and so advantageously situated, for politics and war, between Bohemia and Poland.

Would Frederick be arrested by the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction? This guarantee was void: the Emperor had violated its conditions by giving to two other claimants the same promises relative to Berg and Jülich that he had given to the late King of Prussia.[1] Frederick was therefore free from his father's engagements: and besides, it must be admitted that the *Anti-Machiavel* had been to Frederick little more than a literary exercise, a

[1] The Emperor had even, unknown to Frederick, negotiated with France to confirm Berg and Jülich to the Prince de Sulzbach, heir presumptive of the Palatinate (January 18, 1739). — See *Hist. générale des Traités de Paix*, by M. de Garden, t. III. p. 251, 1849, Paris; Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I. p. 113.

Digitized by Google

rhetorical commonplace; and that the author of this treatise on ethics for the use of kings, scarcely mounted the throne, had stretched his conscience where reasons of State were concerned, and did not trouble himself much about the question of right. Neither did he ask himself whether gratitude, in default of strict right, did not bind him to the daughter of the Emperor. Charles VI. had saved him, in 1730, from the rage of his own father, when the ferocious Frederick William had wished to strike off the head of the royal prince of Prussia, guilty of having endeavored to flee from the paternal tyranny; and the Emperor had interposed as suzerain. Frederick examined nothing but the obstacles and the chances of success. He knew of the disorder of the Austrian finances and army. Abroad, the two States that could do most for or against him were France and Russia. On the side of France, there was no opposition to fear. It was not the same with Russia; but the Czarina Anne had just died, a week after the Emperor (October 27, 1740), after designating as her heir an infant of two months, by the name of Ivan, the grandson of her sister, and consequently the grand-nephew of Peter the Great, and the son of a Duke of Brunswick Bevern, who was Frederick's brother-in-law. The new government was ruled by the German Münnich: the King of Prussia gained over Münnich, and, through him, Russian neutrality.

December 22, a Prussian army entered Silesia, under the singular pretext of preventing the claimants of the Austrian succession from invading this province: meanwhile, an envoy from Frederick was despatched to offer to Maria Theresa to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction, and to aid the Grand Duke of Tuscany to ascend the Imperial throne, in consideration of the cession of the duchies of Glogau and Sagan, a portion of Lower Silesia. For these Frederick would have paid six millions. Maria Theresa, a princess of twenty-three, joined to the hereditary obstinacy of her race a boldness of heart and an activity which her fathers had not shown for several generations, and disdainfully refused what was exacted of her, arms in hand. She appealed to the guarantees of the Pragmatic Sanction: Russia excused herself from succoring her; the English government, embarrassed with its internal struggles against a vehement opposition, and involved, despite itself, in the war with Spain, offered its mediation before fulfilling its engagements to Austria; Holland feared embroiling itself with France; and France had not yet recognized Maria Theresa as the heiress of Charles VI. by any official act. The *Queen of*

Digitized by Google

Hungary wrote touching letters to Louis XV. and Fleuri: it is asserted that she offered France a part of Belgium. Perhaps an arrangement might still have been imposed on Maria Theresa and her adversaries, by adding, to the concessions that we have indicated, a new concession for Prussia. The French cabinet gave evasive answers. Frederick, meanwhile, triumphed without striking a blow, and took possession, in a few days, of three-fourths of Silesia. This great province was stripped of troops, the attack having been wholly unexpected; and the inhabitants, two-thirds Protestant, welcomed the Prussians with open arms. For three months, Austria was not in a condition to do any thing to defend or to recover Silesia.

Events seemed to justify the Count de Belle-Isle. He redoubled his efforts by his correspondence and by the adherents that he had left at Versailles. Nothing was easier, he asserted, than to stifle the new House of Austria in the germ: France would be accountable to posterity, should she neglect so great an opportunity. Neither much money nor many troops were needed: it would suffice to intervene as the auxiliary of Bavaria. With little effort, a great result would be attained, — Maria Theresa would be reduced to the kingdom of Hungary, Lower Austria with its dependencies, and Belgium; and all the rest would be divided among the allies of France, greatly increased by the ruin of Austria. The largest share would belong to the future Emperor, Charles of Bavaria, who would have Bohemia, Austrian Swabia, the Tyrol, and Upper Austria: Milanais was to belong to the second son of the Queen of Spain, the son-in-law of Louis XV. The last part of Belle-Isle's plan attests the lack of solidity of his mind: he had failed to comprehend that Piedmont was the pivot of all coalition in Italy, and that Piedmont could only be gained at the price of Milanais. Fleuri at first refused. It is said that he gave the King a written opinion against the war. The wretchedness that prevailed in France and the depopulation caused by this wretchedness were his principal arguments: nevertheless, when he saw the King strongly influenced by his mistress, his familiars, and the letters of his daughter the young Infanta, who was instigated by the Queen of Spain loudly to demand an appanage for her husband at the expense of Austria, Fleuri yielded by degrees, and suffered the French plenipotentiary in Germany to transform his pacific mission into a mission of war and spoliation.[1]

[1] *Mém. de d'Argenson*, pp. 302–331; Duclos, *Mém. secrets.*

Digitized by Google

An important event came to the aid of Belle-Isle. An Austrian army, assembled in Moravia, had at last made a descent on the plains of Silesia, and a first collision had taken place at Mollwitz, near Brieg (April 10, 1741). The Prussian cavalry had been utterly routed; and the King himself, drawn into the flight of his squadrons, had believed every thing lost. The value of the changes introduced among the infantry by the Prince of Anhalt was then seen.[1] The Prussian battalions, manœuvring, deploying, or forming into squares with unknown precision and quickness, seemed ambulating batteries that tripled the fire by their quickness in loading, to use the expression of Frederick: the enemy's squadrons and battalions, already shaken by a frightful hail of bullets, were broken by their bayonets. The infantry alone, with its pieces of artillery attached to each battalion, after the example of Charles XII., recovered, and won the victory. The Austrians were driven back beyond the Neisse.

Belle-Isle, who had received the marshal's bâton to give him greater authority in Germany, hastened to the camp of the conqueror to urge him to unite with France. Frederick hesitated: he would have preferred treating with Maria Theresa through the medium of the English, and would have still been satisfied with a part of Lower Silesia. Maria Theresa, less disheartened than irritated by a first reverse, again refused. She knew that public opinion in England had vehemently espoused her cause. King George II. had obtained from the parliament the means of executing his defensive compact with Austria; and the parliament had voted, besides a subsidy, £300,000 to the Queen of Hungary. Russia, falling from the hands of the aged Marshal Münnich into those of the Duchess of Brunswick Bevern, the mother of the little Czar Ivan, also returned to the Austrian interests. While the Marshal de Belle-Isle was in Bavaria, whither he had gone to arrange a treaty between the only two claimants to the Austrian succession that had

[1] Frederick II. *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I. p. 102. Vauban had combined the musket and the pike in a single weapon, the musket and bayonet; a reform coinciding with the substitution of the flint-lock for the inconvenient match-lock: the side-arms and the fire-arms had been thus not only combined, but both improved. Vauban had changed the *arms* of the infantry: the Prince of Anhalt changed the *tactics*. He comprehended that their strength must lie, 1st, In the range and quickness of the firing: wherefore he divided the dense ranks of the battalion, made it three men deep, and caused them to load with iron ramrods. 2d, In the speed: wherefore he reëstablished the cadence step, which was the secret of the unity and velocity of the Roman legions, and which had not been given to the modern armies. The *cadenced step* comprises the whole system of tactics, according to the opinion of a great general of the time, — the Marshal de Saxe. — See the *Reveries* of the Marshal de Saxe.

Digitized by Google

yet declared themselves, the King of Spain and the Elector of Bavaria (May 28, 1741), Frederick came to a decision, and signed, June 5, a secret compact with France. Louis XV. guaranteed to him Lower Silesia, which was much the larger and better part of the province, in consideration of his renunciation of Berg and Jülich, and the promise of his vote for the Imperial election of Charles of Bavaria. France promised to send two armies to Germany,— one to second the attack on Austria projected by the Bavarians; the other to prevent the Hanoverians and the Saxons from making a diversion against Brandenburg: she also pledged herself to cause war to be declared by Sweden against Russia in order to retain the Russian forces in the North.

The French government kept its word: two auxiliary armies, of forty thousand men each, crossed the Rhine in the course of August. The first, entering by the way of Swabia, put itself under the orders of the Elector of Bavaria, who had just occupied Passau. The second, commanded by the Marshal de Maillebois, the son of Desmaretz, pushed on to Westphalia. Before the battle of Mollwitz, the Queen of Hungary had succeeded in uniting in a project for the partition of Prussia, the King of England as the Elector of Hanover, the King of Poland as the Elector of Saxony, and the court of Russia; but when the Swedes were seen attacking Russia by the way of Finland, and the French and the Bavarians advancing to assist the victorious Prussians, the Elector of Saxony suddenly changed sides, and supported the enemies of Austria: he was promised, for his share of the booty, Moravia, which was to be erected into a kingdom, and enlarged by a part of Lower Austria. King George II., despite the representations of Walpole, had hastened to his German States to put himself at the head of his Hanoverians, and of twelve thousand Hessians and Danes in the pay of England. He did not wholly imitate his neighbor of Saxony; but, feeling himself too weak to await the onslaught of Maillebois, he solicited neutrality for Hanover, and promised not

[1] Commercial agreements were concluded during the interval (April 25–June 25, 1741) between France and Sweden, between which there had been until then only political agreements. The port of Wismar was granted as a free entrepôt to French commerce, to the exclusion of every other nation. The aim was to establish a direct trade between France and Sweden, instead of employing the medium of the English, the Dutch, and the Hamburghers. The wines of France were substituted in Sweden for the wines of Portugal; and France, on her side, demanded of Sweden the product of her mines and forests. This attempt, unfortunately, was not supported: the government of Louis XV. was incapable of persistency in good. A commercial treaty with Denmark was also made in August, 1742. — See Flassan, t. V. pp. 121–165.

Digitized by Google

to vote for the Grand Duke of Tuscany in the Electoral Diet. The army of Maillebois remained in Westphalia in order to watch over Hanover, and to protect the Electoral Diet convoked at Frankfort. Maria Theresa was thus deprived of all diversion in her favor. Lintz, Entz, all Upper Austria, fell in a few days, and almost without resistance, into the hands of the Franco-Bavarians (September). Already French parties had appeared a few leagues from Vienna, which was insufficiently garrisoned and fortified.

The French invasion had fallen on Maria Theresa like a thunderbolt. Until the last moment, the daughter of Charles VI. had refused to believe the cabinet of Versailles capable of so crying a violation of sworn faith, and so daring a resolution. Every thing seemed to announce the ruin of the House of Austria. It had no longer any allies but the English, who were at a distance; no treasury; scarcely any army! All the regular resources were wanting; and as to the extraordinary resources, the great outbursts of enthusiasm that sometimes save nations whose nationality is attacked — how ask them of the motley collection of different peoples agglomerated in that artificial assemblage styled the Austrian monarchy? Silesia already had surrendered; Bohemia would suffer itself to be taken; Austria itself seemed passive. Maria Theresa weighed with a firm glance the last chance that remained to her. Beyond the Germanic, Germano-Slavic, and Italian provinces, already partitioned in hope, and partly in fact, by diplomacy, extended vast, semi-barbarous countries, the possession of which, always contested either by Ottoman rivalry or by the rude liberty of the natives, had oftener been a peril than a source of strength to the Austrian monarchy, — the kingdom of Hungary with its dependencies. These warlike races had been agitating for the last two centuries at home, in their country, become the perpetual battle-field of the Turks and the Germans. Maria Theresa divined with admirable instinct the advantage that might be derived from their martial genius by opening to them a broad career of glory and booty, and hurling them on Germany. The key of the cave that confined these tempests was in the hands of the Magyar aristocracy: how gain over these magnates, almost all of whom treasured in the recesses of their castles, the portrait, veiled with crape, of some ancestor decapitated by the axe of Austria? The heiress of the Hapsburgs did not despair. While all the other States of the monarchy were sending to her, at Vienna, the homage that they were ready

Digitized by Google

to transfer, on the morrow, to more successful masters, Maria Theresa went, in June, to Presburg, to seek the less ready but surer homage of the Hungarians: and there, before the assembled Diet, she took the famous *oath of Andrew II.;* that is to say, proclaimed the reëstablishment of the ancient Hungarian constitution, abolished by her ancestor Leopold. She omitted only a single article, — that which authorized the Hungarians to take up arms, in defence of their privileges, against any sovereign who should infringe on them. The Diet did not exact its restoration. Another ancient law, likewise abrogated by Leopold, excluded women from the throne: the Diet proclaimed *Maria Theresa King* (June 25),[1] a subterfuge in the style of the antique equivocations, and justified by the virile heart of the woman-king.

This first ordeal had therefore been successful, and Hungary had already furnished some troops for the war in Silesia. On the entrance of the Franco-Bavarians into Austria, Maria Theresa returned from Vienna to Presburg, and presented herself before the Diet, clad in mourning, with the crown of St. Stephen on her head, and the sword of the kings of Hungary by her side. She addressed to the assembly a pathetic harangue in Latin, declaring that, abandoned by all her allies, her only hope was in the faith and valor of the Hungarians; and that she confided her safety, and that of her children, to their hands. At the sight of this beautiful, courageous, and unfortunate young woman, and at her touching words, the Magyar chiefs forgot that they had before them the grand-daughter of the tyrant Leopold:[2] they drew their sabres with enthusiasm, exclaiming, "*Let us die for our king, Maria Theresa!*" and voted the levy *en masse* of Hungary. Touching but mad generosity of chivalric races! The Hungarians and the Poles were to receive the same wages from Austria! The Diet of Presburg refused to see that the dismemberment of the Austrian monarchy was the liberty of the kingdom of Hungary; and that if the Magyars would not profit by circumstances to break with the race of Hapsburg, and to choose a national prince, — the son of Rakoczi, for instance, — it was for the interest of their country, at least, to impose on Maria Theresa a peace which would reduce her to be truly the *Queen of Hungary*, and no longer the heiress of the Emperors.

[1] The Hungarian Diet had accepted the Pragmatic Sanction as early as 1723. Concerning Maria Theresa in Hungary, see Coxe, *Maison d'Autriche*, ch. ci.

[2] Her father had slain their sires; her sons were to slay their sons! It was Batthyanyi, an ancestor of the martyr of 1849, Louis Batthyanyi, who first uttered the cry, "*Moriamur pro rege nostro, Maria Theresa!*"

Digitized by Google

The enthusiastic appeal of the Diet was responded to, among the people, by an enthusiasm of another kind: the old passion for conquest and an adventurous career was aroused among these tribes scarcely tinged with civilization. Hungary and Austrian Slavonia rose; and the people of the Lower Danube, from the Theiss, the Save, and the Drave, the sons of the companions of Arpad, and those of the savage Illyrians, began to precipitate towards the Upper Danube hosts of horse and foot, no longer formed in Imperial regiments, but organized according to their national customs, and fighting in the fashion of the Turks and the Tartars. Fifteen thousand regular soldiers and forty thousand members of irregular bands put themselves in motion.

The *insurrection*[1] of Hungary would have come too late to save Austria had the invasion been well conducted, and had the Franco-Bavarians marched directly to Vienna; but the Elector of Bavaria had neither the talent nor character befitting the important part that circumstances had led him to usurp. He dared not move immediately upon Vienna, for want of heavy artillery; then he was afraid that the Saxons, his new allies, would seek to take possession of Bohemia on their own account, should he go to Vienna instead of Prague; lastly, the aged Fleuri, fearing already lest the future Emperor might be too powerful if he possessed the capital of the Austrian monarchy, opposed the siege of Vienna. The spirit of jealousy and distrust, so common in coalitions, showed itself already in the most petty forms, which presented a striking contrast to the greatness of the occasion. After a month's hesitation, the Franco-Bavarian army crossed the Danube, and proceeded to Bohemia: a detached corps alone remained to guard Upper Austria (the end of October).

The dissatisfaction of the King of Prussia was extreme: he had thought that the Franco-Bavarians, by advancing on Vienna, would rid him of the army defeated at Mollwitz, but not destroyed, which was still defending Upper Silesia against him, and which would not have failed to hasten to the aid of the capital. The injudicious operation of the Elector of Bavaria gave Frederick doubts thenceforth of the success of the coalition,—a success, moreover, that he did not desire complete; for he feared, on his side, to see the French power too preponderant, and he would have gladly weakened Austria without destroying her. The result desired by Frederick, the evacuation of Silesia by the Austrians, was

[1] This is the first time that we find the words "insurrection" and "insurgents." The sense of "levy in a body" is given them in contemporaneous writers.

Digitized by Google

meanwhile obtained without fighting. The Austrian army fell back on Moravia, abandoning the fortified town of Neisse, which surrendered almost immediately. Frederick, directly after, put his troops into winter-quarters, despite the entreaty of his allies to second their Bohemian expedition. The allies were ignorant of the secret of his conduct; which was, that the English diplomatic agents had at last persuaded Maria Theresa to make terms with the first of her enemies in order to be able to defend herself against the rest. By an agreement of October 9, the Queen of Hungary had ceded to the King of Prussia Lower Silesia, with the town of Neisse; and Frederick had pledged himself to cease all participation in the war, regardless of the promises that he had made to France and Bavaria not to treat except with their consent. Sworn faith was to be a light thing to him throughout life. In truth, the author of the *Anti-Machiavel* compensated for his lack of fidelity by an act of *Machiavellianism* in an inverse direction: while he forfeited his word, he urged the Saxons to keep theirs, and to fall upon Bohemia.[1]

The situation of the allies became, meanwhile, somewhat critical by the defection of the King of Prussia, and, above all, by the incapacity of the Elector of Bavaria. The Elector had committed a first mistake in not marching on Vienna: he committed a second in marching on Prague, instead of taking horse on the Danube, occupying Upper Austria with his right, and the entrance to Bohemia with his principal forces, and attacking Prague only with his left, reënforced by twenty thousand Saxons. The Austrians, who were massed on the confines of Moravia, Bohemia, and Austria, would have been unable to return to the interior of Bohemia had they encountered the main body of the Franco-Bavarians between the marshes of the Upper Moldau and the Lausnitz, in the famous camps of Ziska; but they found before them only insufficient and badly commanded forces, they broke these, cut them off from Upper Austria, and debouched into the Valley of the Moldau. Their army was composed of the troops returned from Silesia and all that could be drawn from the neighboring provinces. The enthusiasm of Hungary had reacted on Vienna and the other countries of the Empire, and the levies and requisitions were effected with vigor and celerity. The Grand Duke of Tuscany, the husband of Maria Theresa, advanced to the aid of Prague. A single repulse would have driven back the allies into Saxony and

[1] Garden, t. III. p. 261; Frederick II. *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I. ch. iii., iv.; *Mém. de Valori* (ambassador of France in Prussia), t. I. p. 125.

Digitized by Google

the Upper Palatinate. It was impossible to besiege Prague methodically: the Elector of Bavaria received the bold counsel to attack the town by escalade. The author of this advice was Count Maurice de Saxe, the natural son of the late King of Poland, Augustus II., an adventurer full of fierce passion, violent ambition, and lofty martial inspiration. After causing himself to be elected Duke of Courland by the States of that sovereignty in 1726, and disputing his duchy with heroic temerity against Russia and Poland,[1] he had enlisted in the service of France, had won distinction in the war of 1733, and was commanding one of the divisions of the army of the Danube. The Elector had at least the good sense to listen to Maurice. The author of the project was also its executioner. Maurice de Saxe took for his second in the enterprise a man who had nothing in common with him but courage,—Lieutenant-Colonel Chevert, an officer sprung from the ranks of the people, who was virtue itself in a corrupt age, as Maurice was unbridled passion. The city was defended only by bastioned walls and dry fosses. During the night of November 25, while the attention of the garrison was diverted by different attacks, Chevert silently scaled a bastion at the head of a few grenadiers, repulsed the enemy who had hastened thither at the cries of the sentinels, seized a neighboring gate, and opened it to the French cavalry of Maurice. The Saxons entered the town at another point; and the garrison, few in numbers, laid down their arms. The generals preserved the city from sacking and pillage: this was notable progress in military customs. The Grand Duke of Tuscany, who had arrived within a few miles of Prague, fell back precipitately towards the Upper Moldau and the Lausnitz. The Elector of Bavaria caused himself to be crowned King of Bohemia.[2]

Prague, in fact, had given Bohemia to its conquerors; but a general was needed to sustain and push this advantage. There was none. Maurice de Saxe had only an inferior command; and the Marshal de Belle-Isle, who understood war perhaps more thoroughly than diplomacy, and who was to have taken the direction of the army in the name of the Elector, was disappointed in his hopes of glory by his ill health. After hastening sick from Frankfort to Prague, he felt himself unable to endure the fatigues

[1] Poland still exercised a nominal suzerainty over Courland. Russia ruled there in fact, and had expelled Maurice de Saxe to install Bieren, the minister and lover of the Czarina Anne.

[2] D'Espagnac, *Hist. du maréchal de Saxe*, t. I. liv. iv.

Digitized by Google

of war, and was compelled to ask the French cabinet to send another marshal in his place. It sent the aged Broglie, a true wreck of a soldier, who had had two attacks of apoplexy, and who was devoid of consistency and the power of combination. Scarcely had Broglie joined the army, when the Austrians, reënforced daily by new levies, resumed the offensive at all points. Six thousand regular soldiers and Croat partisans entered Bavaria through the Tyrol, and spread terror there; twenty thousand soldiers, drawn partly from Hungary and partly from the garrisons of Lombardy, advanced from Vienna to recover Lower Austria; lastly, the principal army threatened the position of the allies in Bohemia.

The allies raised new appeals to Frederick II. Frederick responded to them, and betrayed his engagements to Maria Theresa as he had betrayed his engagements to France. He excuses himself, in the *History of My Times*, on the plea that the court of Vienna had been first to forfeit its word by divulging their agreement, which was to have remained secret. His true motives were to extort the cession of Upper Silesia, and to prevent the Austrians from regaining the advantage over the allies. He precipitated an army upon Moldavia, which entered Olmutz, December 26, and hastened in person to Dresden and Prague to concert operations with the Saxons and the Franco-Bavarians. The plan which he caused to be adopted was to join sixteen thousand Saxons and five thousand French to the Prussians in Moravia, and to throw this combined army upon Lower Austria, which would release Upper Austria and Bavaria; but, before this junction could be effected, the seven or eight thousand Franco-Bavarians[1] that were occupying Upper Austria had been driven back into Lintz by twenty thousand Austro-Hungarians, and their commander Ségur had too hastily capitulated, and evacuated Lintz, promising that his troops should not bear arms for a year (January 23, 1742). The main body of the troops that had reconquered Lintz invaded Bavaria, which the mountaineers of the Tyrol attacked at the same time on the opposite side. The war had become popular in the greater part of the Austrian provinces, which the allies had claimed the right of partitioning like flocks of sheep, without offering the people any thing that could render the change of masters advantageous to them. The Elector, Charles of Bavaria, was elected Emperor under sad auspices meanwhile at

[1] The Elector of Bavaria, who had promised to raise twenty-eight thousand men, had at first put in the field only twelve thousand, although aided by a subsidy of six millions from France. — *Hist. de la Guerre de* 1741, p. 82.

Digitized by Google

Frankfort (January 24). On the day after the coronation of the Emperor Charles VII. (February 12), the bands of Maria Theresa entered Munich, a presage of the short duration of the transfer of the Empire to other hands than those of the sovereigns of Austria.

The plan of Frederick, well executed, might have compensated for these reverses; but the King of Prussia was badly seconded by his allies. The French division, which Broglie had granted him with a very ill grace, was soon recalled to the interior of Bohemia, where the French troops melted away under fever; and the Saxons, who did not suffer less, once in Moravia, would proceed no farther. Frederick could hurl to the gates of Vienna only a body of partisans, and not an army. He indemnified himself by laying waste Moravia, from which he took men, money, horses, — every thing that he could take. He had no interest in sparing this country, like Silesia, since he had not the hope of keeping it. He had improved upon his father's system of recruital by carrying off the young men from the countries that he invaded, and incorporating them by force into his army. With an army thus constituted, Frederick would have risked much in case of a repulse. In the month of April, harassed by the Hungarian bands, and having no confidence in the Saxons, he abandoned Moravia, and fell back on Bohemia. The war was concentrated in Bohemia and Bavaria. A new corps of ten thousand French, a very insufficient aid, had crossed the Rhine in March, and forced the Austrians to evacuate the greater part of the Bavarian territory, which they had ravaged with the utmost barbarity.

The general state of affairs, however, was sensibly modified in favor of Austria. Turkey, far from profiting by the peril of Maria Theresa, observed the treaty of 1739 with a fidelity that shamed the Christian princes. The diversion effected by Sweden against Russia, in behalf of France, had begun by a defeat in Finland (September, 1741); since which, a successful conspiracy at St. Petersburg had overthrown the young Czar Ivan, and raised to the throne the second daughter of Peter the Great, the Czarina Elizabeth (December 6, 1741). This revolution, which was the signal for a fierce Muscovite reaction against the rule of foreigners, — of the German ministers and generals, — and which threatened to shake the work of Peter the Great while crowning his daughter,[1] had at first appeared destined to be advantageous

[1] Elizabeth, in her manifesto issued on the day of her accession, declared that the throne belonged to her *by right of birth*: this also was a reaction against Peter the

Digitized by Google

to French policy; but this was not the case. English diplomacy prevailed at St. Petersburg, and the new Russian ministers vigorously prosecuted the war against Sweden. Another revolution, much less violent, but more important to the Queen of Hungary, had just thrown the aged Fleuri into consternation. The minister who had given England twenty years of material prosperity and political corruption, Robert Walpole, had at last fallen after a desperate struggle. The minister of peace could not be the minister of war. The war had occurred in spite of him, against his wishes: he was not trusted to carry it on. The maritime events of 1741, little in conformity with the hopes of England, and the capitulation of Hanover, which wounded the pride of the English through their King, were imputed to him by public opinion. The capture of Porto Bello by Admiral Vernon had been the beginning of a great plan for the seizure of the Isthmus of Panama. Commodore Anson had been commissioned to complete the occupation of the isthmus by attacking it on the opposite side by the way of the Pacific Ocean, while Vernon pushed his conquests on the mainland and in the West Indies; but Anson saw the best part of his little squadron wrecked and dispersed by the tempests of Cape Horn, and was unable to attack Panama.[1] Vernon, despite the great forces that had been sent him, failed in his attack on Carthagena (April, 1741), then on the Island of Cuba, and lastly on Panama, which he had attempted to take by land by transporting his land forces across the isthmus. These reverses, the more painful to England, inasmuch as her enemies had resisted her with very feeble resources, contrasted singularly with the exploits of the privateers and sailors of Louis XIV. in these same countries: the cool courage of the English seemed little fitted for such adventures.

England threw all the blame upon Walpole. He had not, it was said, reënforced Vernon soon enough: he did not know how to protect commerce, which was destroyed by a multitude of Basque or French privateers under the Spanish flag (Voltaire pretends that a single English privateer captured, on its side, twenty-six

Great, who, by his famous ukase of February, 1722, had substituted, for hereditary transmission according to blood, the choice of the successor by the reigning prince. — See Rousset, t. XVI. p. 511. A French surgeon, Lestocq, was the principal adviser of Elizabeth in this crisis.

[1] He indemnified himself by capturing in the China Sea the rich galleon of the Philippines, freighted with more than seven millions' worth of property; and did not return to England until 1744, after having made his celebrated voyage around the world.

Digitized by Google

millions from Spain). Walpole made unheard-of efforts to sustain himself: he demanded three millions from Fleuri to buy over the leaders of the opposition;[1] but this means, so long efficacious, was finally worn out: whether from patriotism or ambition, some refused to sell themselves; others, having done so, broke off the bargain. Walpole, on the point of being impeached, retired, and was replaced by Lord Carteret, a violent adversary of France (February, 1742). One of the first acts of the new cabinet was to increase the navy to forty thousand sailors, and the army to sixty-two thousand five hundred soldiers, besides the Hanoverian and Hessian auxiliaries;[2] a subsidy of £500,000 was voted to Maria Theresa; sixteen thousand English were despatched without delay to the Austrian Netherlands; then a like number of Hanoverians was taken into the pay of England, as if to menace the north of France; and the cabinet of Saint James acted so warmly on Holland, that the States-General, contrary to the sentiment of the most enlightened patriots and of several of the United Provinces, voted a subsidy to Maria Theresa, and thus took the first steps towards a war with France, — a war which could not but be fatal to the liberty and all the true interests of the United Provinces.

As soon as France had interfered to make an Emperor and to rule Germany by arms, the vehement intervention of England in an inverse direction had become inevitable: the German interests of George II. and the old British jealousy could not fail to harmonize. England prepared to play in fact the first part in this war, under the title of the auxiliary of Maria Theresa, as France was playing it on the opposite side, under the title of the auxiliary of the new Emperor. The expenditures of Great Britain were increased as early as this

[1] The curious letter written by him to Fleuri on this occasion has been preserved. "I am paying," he says, "a subsidy to half the members of the parliament to keep them within the bounds of peace; but as the King has not money enough, and as those to whom I do not give it declare themselves openly in favor of war, it is expedient that your Eminence should send me three millions Tournois to weaken the voices of those that make the most outcry. Gold is a metal that soothes the most warlike blood. There is not a fierce warrior in the parliament that a pension of £2,000 would not render very pacific. This is certain, — if England declares war, you will be forced to pay subsidies to other powers, without taking into account the fact that the success of the war may be uncertain; while, by sending me the money, you buy peace from the first party." — Memoirs of Walpole, cited by Flassan, *Hist. de la Diplom. française*, t. V. p. 185. The event proved that passions and opinions do not always yield to covetous interests, as Walpole imagined.

[2] England lost her Danish auxiliaries during the interval, Denmark having treated with France.

Digitized by Google

year to nearly £6,000,000, obtained by a tax of twenty per cent on the landed income, a tax on malt, the use of a part of the sinking fund, and a loan of £1,600,000 from the bank. As to the French government, it had reëstablished the income-tax, August 29, 1741,[1] and created new life-*rentes* on the city.

The Cardinal de Fleuri saw, with all the emotion of which his cold nature was capable, the external policy of twenty-seven years crumbling, and France ready to recommence her traditional struggle with her great and ancient enemy, transformed for some time into a doubtful ally. He felt how few resources he had prepared for this grave contingency. Another important event redoubled the alarm of the aged minister, — the defection of the King of Prussia. The great diversion against Vienna once foiled, Frederick had thought only of doing again what he had already done in October, 1741. His father's treasury was well-nigh exhausted. Prussia was too poor to find it possible to exist by loans or *extraordinary taxes*, and Frederick was by no means disposed to ruin himself for allies that knew how to do so little for themselves. When he returned from Moravia to Bohemia, he had his conditions of peace fully decided in his mind ; but he felt the necessity of first humbling the pride of Maria Theresa by a new victory. While part of the Austrian forces held the French in check on the Moldau, another army corps marched against the Prussians near the Upper Elbe. Frederick went to meet them, and gave battle, May 17, near Czaslau. The Austrians were the second time defeated. The Prussian cavalry this time showed itself worthy of the infantry. The latter, with its triple ranks of musketry, fired so rapidly and with so true an aim, that almost two entire Austrian and Hungarian regiments were stretched on the ground before the post of a Prussian corps which they had attacked. Frederick attained his end. Maria Theresa yielded to the entreaties of English diplomacy, which had the greater right to assume an authoritative tone with her, inasmuch as it was beginning to aid her more vigorously. The Queen of Hungary ceded all Silesia, except Troppau, Jägerndorf, and Teschen: the preliminaries of peace between Austria and Prussia

[1] This time, the declaration of the tax-payers was not deemed sufficient: the lists were fixed according to the estimate of the incomes made by the officers of the intendant. This was falling into the contrary excess. The tithe yielded twenty-three millions in the *pays d'élection* alone. As during the war of 1733, the privileges of the clergy were nominally maintained in consideration of considerable gratuities; a first gratuity of twelve millions being made in 1742; then a second, of sixteen millions. — See Bailli, *Hist. financière*, t. II. p. 121; and *Journal de Louis XV.* p. 199.

Digitized by Google

were signed June 11. Frederick excused himself as well as he could to the Cardinal de Fleuri, and protested, that, in abandoning *through necessity* the alliance of France, he did not abandon her interests. He was, at least, fully determined to continue his system of oscillation between France and Austria, and did not intend to withdraw definitively from the lists.[1]

For the moment, his defection, imitated by the Elector of Saxony, was productive of baleful consequences to the French. The Marshal de Broglie, despite the advice of Belle-Isle, who had returned to the army, had persisted in extending his quarters over sixteen leagues of land along the Moldau. A few days before the signature of the preliminaries with Prussia, the Austrian generals, knowing the state of the negotiations, and no longer dreading any thing from Frederick, united the army defeated at Czaslau with the corps that had opposed the French, fell on the posts of Broglie, forced the crossing of the Moldau, and drove back Broglie from Frauenburg upon Prague, after capturing his equipages: all the stragglers were massacred by the Hungarian and Slavonic bands (June 4–13). The Austrian forces, about forty thousand regular soldiers and twenty-five thousand partisans or *insurgents*, soon hemmed in, under the guns of Prague, the French army, reduced to less than twenty-five thousand men. Fleuri, terrified, hastily despatched instructions to the Marshal de Belle-Isle, concluding with the words, "Peace, monsieur, at whatever price it may be!" Belle-Isle requested a conference of the Field-Marshal Königsegg, and proposed a preliminary agreement for the evacuation of Bohemia (July 2). Königsegg referred him to his sovereign, and received, a few days after, a pitiable letter from Fleuri. "I think it incumbent on me," said the aged minister, "to express to your Excellency the extreme sorrow with which I have learned that I am regarded at Vienna as the principal author of the disturbances that are agitating Germany. . . . Your court does not render me justice. Many know how much I was opposed to the course that was pursued, and that I was in some sort forced to consent to it by the very pressing motives that were alleged. Your Excellency . . . will easily divine *who* it was that set every engine in motion to induce the King to enter into a league which was so contrary to my tastes and principles" (July 11). This shameful dotage, by which Fleuri denounced to the court of Vienna the very plenipotentiary commissioned to negotiate with it, and which

[1] Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I. ch. vi. vii.; Valori, t. I. pp. 157–165; Flassan, t. V. p. 152.

Digitized by Google

terminated by an appeal to the moderation and almost to the clemency of Austria, was immediately made public by the order of Maria Theresa, and rendered the cabinet of Versailles the laughing-stock of Europe. The Queen of Hungary refused to treat unless the army of Bohemia surrendered itself prisoner. In her turn, she suffered the decisive moment to escape. By ceding to the Emperor Austrian Swabia, a possession remote and difficult of defence, she might have secured all the rest of the paternal inheritance, and imposed on the Franco-Bavarians the condition of aiding her to recapture Silesia. Her passionate heart pursued its vengeance, and not its interests.[1]

Maria Theresa would have been cruelly punished ere long, had she been forced to deal with other adversaries than Fleuri and Broglie. The Austrian infantry was ruined before Prague, and before the French camp defended with terrible energy by the troops of Broglie and Belle-Isle. The bloody and victorious sorties from Prague redeemed the honor of our banners compromised at Lintz, and responded worthily to the insolent summons to lay down our arms. Our troops, however, suffered not less than the enemy; but, during this time, the other French army, which had wintered in Westphalia, passed the spring in inaction, and then been recalled from beyond the Rhine to observe the Anglo-German forces that were assembling in Belgium, — the army of Maillebois, — had returned to the interior of Germany, and was marching towards Bohemia. In the first part of September, the Austrians raised the blockade of Prague, and moved to meet Maillebois. Broglie and Belle-Isle sallied forth in the enemy's rear. Every thing presaged a disaster to the Austrians, provided that the leaders of the two French armies did their duty. Broglie succeeded only in preventing the execution of an excellent plan of Belle-Isle for capturing the siege park of the enemies on their retreat: as to Maillebois, his hands were tied! The cabinet of Vienna, suddenly mollified in the presence of peril, had reopened negotiations; and Fleuri had forbidden Maillebois to advance, or to risk any thing. The Grand Duke of Tuscany and Königsegg thus had time to recall from Bavaria the best part of the Austrian corps that was holding the field there, and to plant themselves in a strong position in the forests and mountains that separate the Upper Palatinate from Bohemia. When Fleuri finally perceived that he had been trifled with, it was too late, or at least the chances of success had become much more doubtful. Maillebois,

[1] Flassan, t. V. p. 160; D'Espagnac, t. I. p. 257; Valori, t. II. p. 169.

Digitized by Google

bound by his timid instructions, renounced the junction with Broglie and Belle-Isle; fell back on Bavaria, where he completed the almost entire expulsion of the Austrians, and established his army there for the winter (the end of October). A part of the Austrian army repaired to Prague, and again shut in Belle-Isle, at last rid of his colleague, who had gone, says Valori, "to carry into the army of Bavaria the spirit of disorder and madness with which he had done so much harm in Bohemia."[1] He had received the command of this army in the place of Maillebois.

Belle-Isle soon found himself in a situation almost as critical as before the diversion of Maillebois. Confined, with a force decreasing from day to day, in a great city, the population of which was in favor of the enemy;[2] harassed by the Hungarian and Slavonian bands that intercepted all communication and revictualling, —he could nevertheless have maintained himself in Prague until spring. The enemy's corps, that was observing rather than besieging him, was not superior to his own; but the cabinet of Versailles despatched orders to him to evacuate Prague at any price. He was forced to obey: he adroitly concealed his design from the Austrian general, and sallied forth from the city, December 16, with fourteen thousand shattered troops, leaving at Prague the sick and wounded, unable to be transported, under the guard of a handful of soldiers commanded by the brave Chevert. The cold was intense; and Belle-Isle had been far from taking the precautions to protect his men against it, exacted by prudence and humanity. Every thing was covered with snow and ice; and the Austrians had cut off the defiles, and broken down the bridges on the two highways of the mountainous country that led to Eger, the last town of Bohemia on the side of the Upper Palatinate. Fortunately, however, the main body of the Austrian forces was on the right bank of the Moldau, and was unable to cross on account of the ice that was drifting in the river; and Belle-Isle had to oppose only five or six thousand hussars and Slavonians scattered along the left bank. He repulsed them in the plain, then avoided them on the mountain by taking an unfrequented road between the two highways to Eger. The column reached this town, thirty-eight leagues from Prague, after ten days of inex-

[1] Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I. p. 278; Valori, t. I. p. 174; D'Espagnac, t. I. liv. v.

[2] This disposition was not general in Bohemia. Frederick II. says that the peasants inclined more to the Bavarian Emperor than to Maria Theresa. Advantage was not taken of this to raise recruits.

Digitized by Google

pressible suffering. The road was strewn with soldiers that had perished of cold or hunger; many more died or had their frozen limbs amputated in the hospitals of Eger; a still greater number never recovered from the sufferings that they had endured. Among these last was a young officer of the royal regiment (of infantry), who continued to languish till life became extinct, at thirty-two. He was an irreparable loss to France. This young unknown, Vauvenargues, was, perhaps, the man of all others who would have exercised the most salutary influence on the French mind of the eighteenth century: he was carried off at the moment when the first flowers of his genius were beginning to open. We shall soon recur to this pure and touching figure, that appeared but for an instant among us, to leave us eternal regrets.

An heroic incident casts a ray of glory on this painful retreat. Chevert, left in Prague with a garrison of men, for the most part, incapable of bearing arms, was summoned to surrender at discretion. "Tell your general," he replied to the bearer of the Austrian flag of truce, "that, if he does not grant me the honors of war, I will set fire to the four corners of Prague, and bury myself beneath its ruins." The capitulation was granted, to the great displeasure of the implacable Maria Theresa; and Chevert rejoined Belle-Isle with his train of invalids. While a frivolous court was consoling itself for our losses and humiliations by lampooning our generals, a plebeian officer thus showed himself, in the military decline of the monarchy, the precursor of the Hoches, the Marceaus, and the Desaixes.

Belle-Isle brought back to France, in the beginning of 1743, twelve thousand worn-out men, the wrecks of more than fifty thousand soldiers, who, well commanded, would have sufficed to overthrow the Austrian monarchy in its first confusion. The abandonment of Bohemia presaged that of Bavaria.

The year 1742 had ended unhappily for France and her allies. In the North, the enterprise to which Sweden had been incited, without taking into account her real weakness, and without securing for her the indispensable coöperation of Turkey, had ended only in disaster. Since a species of aristocratic republic had replaced the monarchical power, Sweden no longer possessed an army, and she had been induced to commit the folly of attacking Russia with militia. The Swedes, defeated in every encounter, were compelled to evacuate Finland by capitulation (August, 1742): the following year, in order to obtain peace and the par-

Digitized by Google

tial restitution of Finland through English mediation, they were forced to humiliate themselves so far as to receive a king from the hands of Russia. The treaty of peace imposed on them the election of the Duke of Holstein Eutin, the Lutheran bishop of Lubeck, and allied to the Imperial House of Russia, as successor to the throne. The family alliance contracted by Peter the Great with the House of Holstein was a means and a formidable pretext for interfering in the internal affairs of Sweden, Denmark, and Lower Saxony.[1]

The war had not commenced in Italy until the summer of 1742; and there the blind ambition of the court of Spain and the weakness of the French cabinet had annulled in advance the principal chance of success by alienating the King of Sardinia. Charles Emmanuel would have asked nothing better than to act in concert with the Bourbons against Austria; but on becoming certain that the Queen of Spain, despite her promises, desired every thing for her younger son, he yielded to the entreaties of the English, and returned to Maria Theresa: while formally making a reservation of his claims to Milanais, he promised to defend this province against the Spaniards. The latter had, as allies, the King of Naples and the Duke of Modena: all the other Italian States had declared themselves neutral. The husband of Maria Theresa himself, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, had taken this course in order to preserve his duchy. The Spaniards had made preparations for a double attack, — an army, landed at the *presides* of Tuscany, under the protection of a Franco-Spanish fleet which the English had not been in a position to attack, was to move against the territory of Parma and Milanais after having been reënforced by the Neapolitan troops; another corps, passing through the south of France, was to enter Piedmont by the way of Nice. The cabinet of Versailles, both through economy and through the hope of gaining Charles Emmanuel anew, furnished no contingent this year to Spain. The Austro-Piedmontese anticipated the Hispano-Neapolitans in Lombardy: they invaded the territory of Modena, and drove back the Spaniards upon the Pontifical territory. At the same time, an English squadron threatened to bombard Naples if King Carlos did not withdraw from

[1] Denmark had attempted to profit by the misfortunes of Sweden to reëstablish the union of Calmar, by securing the election of the crown prince of Denmark as successor to the throne of Sweden. Russia caused the failure of this project, which would have been so salutary to Scandinavia and to all Europe. — See Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. I. p. 284; t. II. p. 17.

Digitized by Google

the Spanish alliance. The King of Naples yielded to this barbarous menace, and recalled his troops (July–August, 1742). The attack against Piedmont by the way of Nice likewise failed: the Infant, Don Philip, repulsed in this direction, invaded Savoy by the way of Dauphiny, — an easy conquest, but one that did not give him the key of Italy (September, 1742–January, 1743).

The year 1743 opened with an event that excited great expectations in Europe. The man who had taken in hand the government of France at an already advanced period of life, and who had persisted in keeping it to an age of which our political history offers no other example (the Cardinal de Fleuri), expired, January 29, in his ninetieth year, the seventeenth of his ministry. He had ruled almost as long as Richelieu or Mazarin. His rule, however, had resembled theirs only as decrepitude resembles manhood.[1] He would be styled wise if voluntarily short-sighted selfishness could be called wisdom, and if passion for power, without the great thoughts and moral vigor which make almost a virtue of ambition, could be excused. We have examined elsewhere his economical administration: had he maintained with perseverance the pacific system in which he gloried, we might give him credit for the blessings of peace, while reproaching him for having forgotten that a great nation which does not wish to attack should always be ready for defence; but he neither knew how to prepare for war nor for peace. Drawn into a conflict in spite of himself, he did much more than he desired, much less than it was necessary to do, to decide the success of this conflict, directed it deplorably from the recesses of his cabinet, and left France endangered by a war that was increasing from day to day; having lost the renown for moderation, justice, and pacific spirit, that he had designed to secure for himself, without winning a reputation for active and conquering power. If the Continental war had already shown the effects of his bad guidance, maritime affairs were soon to manifest its more fatal consequences.

[1] He had, however, a moral advantage over his illustrious predecessors: he was the first of our ministers who lived without pomp, and died poor. His indifference to money is something remarkable in a nature so little elevated in every other respect.

Digitized by Google

SECTION II. — LOUIS XV. CONTINUATION AND END OF THE WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

1743–1748.

THE power of a single man was succeeded in the council by a sort of anarchy. Louis XV. reiterated the declaration of his intention of governing alone that he had already made on the very accession of Fleuri, adding, this time, that he should no longer have a prime minister,[1] and kept his word as to the latter point. The sole result was, that there ceased to be any unity in the government. Louis XV. did not sustain for a week the effort of will that his great grandfather had sustained for more than half a century, — not because the mind and the judgment, the comprehensive faculties, were not developed in him; but because the active faculties, those that come from the heart, were never developed. The need of action, the sentiment of duty, self-esteem, and the desire of justifying himself in his own eyes and in the eyes of others, were always wanting in this unhappily constituted man, who never had confidence either in others or himself. He brought to his council an abstracted and uncertain mind: much was said there, scarcely any thing was decided; and each of the special ministers was almost sovereign in his own department, while the two ministers without departments vainly aspired to direct affairs in general. One was the shameless Tencin, become cardinal and archbishop of Lyons in recompense for his services against the Jansenists, and minister in recompense for his flattery of the aged Fleuri. There was not the stuff in him for a Dubois: vice did not suffice for this. The other, oftener listened to, was the Marshal de Noailles, still fertile in ingenious projects, but less and less capable, in proportion as he grew older, of connecting, following out, and realizing his ideas, which were like flashes of light in a fog. A retired personage, without official title, the Duke de Richelieu, from the pander of the King aspired to become his counsellor, and obtained at moments a considerable influence, owing to the support of a new mistress recently installed with éclat.

[1] Chauvelin had succeeded in forwarding to the King a memorial in justification of himself: the men who surrounded Louis XIV. represented the illustrious exile to him as an ambitious man who designed to *govern* him, and to impose himself on him as prime minister. Distrustful, like all weak minds, Louis replied only by aggravating the exile of Chauvelin.

Digitized by Google

The ministers with departments nevertheless remained masters of the whole current of affairs. They were six in number, — the chancellor, the comptroller-general, and the four secretaries of State. The comptroller-general, Orri, was a lover of order, upright, but harsh, a prey to the revenue farmers, acquainted only with his financial routine, and understanding nothing of maritime and colonial interests, which were, in great part, under his jurisdiction; the Indian Company being in his department. The foreign affairs were in the hands of a lettered and erudite man, but one without political capacity, — Amelot, who was governed by the minister of the marine, Phélippeaux de Maurepas, the son of the too famous Jérôme de Pontchartrain.[1] Maurepas, born a minister, so to speak, and spoiled from childhood by the court, amused the King by his elegant and facile wit, but revived the marine little except in words. Frivolous and corrupt, although capable of a certain activity, he was as incapable as Richelieu of seriousness and solidity. He had espoused the passions of the Queen of Spain in order to secure for himself a support abroad. The interests of commerçe and the marine were stifled between him and Orri. In the unimportant ministry of the affairs of the *so-called reformers*, the King's household, and the *lettres de cachet*, figured a cousin of Maurepas, Phelippeaux de Saint-Florentin, the son of the La Vrillière of 1685, an hereditary persecutor, the pensioner of the assembly of the clergy, who, become absolute master in his department, was about to let loose against the Protestants a persecution more horrible and more obstinate than that of *Monsieur le Duc*. The ministry of war, left vacant by the death of the obscure Breteuil, had just been given, on the contrary, to a man of sense, somewhat frivolous, but brilliant, liberal, and open to new ideas, — the Count d'Argenson, one of the sons of the celebrated lieutenant of police. D'Argenson, the friend of the philosophers, who, in concert with Richelieu, summoned Voltaire to the court, and sought to make him a diplomatist, by the side of Saint-Florentin, pensioned by the clergy for hunting down the Huguenots, — this was chaos!

Lastly, another minister, the first in rank, the last perhaps in influence on the general policy, was the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, restored to the possession of the seals on the fall of Chauvelin, in 1737. This personage, who was far from having among his con-

[1] Saint-Simon, while causing the expulsion of the father during the Regency, had secured the maintenance of the survivorship to the son; thus sanctioning the greatest of the abuses against which he protests so loudly in his Memoirs.

Digitized by Google

temporaries an importance corresponding to the great name that has been given him, numbered in his public life three strongly marked periods. The brilliant and courageous magistrate of the first epoch had become, in the second, a mediocre, over-scrupulous, and vacillating minister: he had shown himself, as Saint-Simon wittily calls him, the *father of difficulties*, and the man of all others least fitted for public affairs at a critical moment. In the third period, he retrieved his reputation by withdrawing from politics, which he did not understand, and confining himself to his special ministry, in which he rendered important services by introducing unity, not into the laws of France, which would have been far beyond his power and even his desires, but at least into the interpretation of these laws, which varied from one tribunal to another, thus adding greatly to the inconveniences of the diversity of the local laws. The unity of jurisprudence was a step towards the unity of legislation which D'Aguesseau would assuredly have regarded as a rash Utopian scheme.

The aspect of affairs was not reassuring at the opening of the campaign of 1743. Austria, whose States found themselves rid of invasion, was preparing to renew her attack on the States of the Emperor. The King of England had broken the neutrality of Hanover, and crossed the Channel to take command of the Anglo-German army assembled in Belgium in the autumn of 1742,—an army that would have greatly embarrassed the French government, had it attacked our frontiers before winter. The want of success of the aggressions against the Spanish colonies roused the English to strike a blow on the Continent that would at once humble France and Spain. Their diplomacy endeavored to stir up all Europe: it succeeded only too well in Holland. The Orange and English party, that saw in the war a chance of reëstablishing the stadtholdership, rekindled the old popular passions against France, and, gold and intrigue aiding, wrung from the States-General the engagement to furnish twenty thousand auxiliaries to Maria Theresa (May, 1743). Never did people commit a grosser mistake: Holland risked, for a cause that was absolutely foreign to her, her political liberty and her commerce, which was enriched by her neutrality between England and Spain.

When this unhappy resolution was adopted, the Anglo-German army had quitted Belgium and gained the Rhine, despite the lively remonstrances of Frederick II. against the entrance of the English into the Empire. The King of Prussia would have gladly restrained Holland, and induced the Germanic Diet to interpose

Digitized by Google

its arbitration, and to levy an *army of neutrality;* but the ecclesiastical electors and the petty German princes were already relapsing into their habits of obsequious deference to Austria, and Frederick was unable to obtain any thing of importance. The Anglo-German army, consisting of thirty-nine thousand men in the pay of England, of whom twenty-seven thousand were native Englishmen, and ten thousand Austrians, crossed the Rhine, May 14, in order to cut off the army of Bavaria from France while the Austrian army attacked it in front. A new French army, which had had for its nucleus the remnants of the troops from Bohemia, and a few regiments recalled from Bavaria, had been formed in the East under the command of the Marshal de Noailles. Belle-Isle was in partial disgrace. Noailles crossed the Rhine after the King of England in order to arrest him between the Neckar and the Main; but the fate of Bavaria was decided too speedily for George or Noailles to be able to influence it. The Franco-Bavarian troops, greatly weakened by fever, were dispersed through too far extended cantonments. On the first movements of the Austrians, in April, the Bavarian Field-Marshal Seckendorf[1] entreated the Marshal de Broglie to concentrate the French. Broglie did nothing of the kind. On May 9, the Austrians captured a corps of five or six thousand Bavarians at Braunau, on the Inn; then fell upon the French quarters, and drove Broglie from the Inn to the Isar, and from the Isar to the Lech. Broglie suffered himself to be expelled from all Bavaria in a month, without attempting to make a stand anywhere. The unhappy Emperor Charles VII. fled from his capital, and went to parade his vain title and pompous ruin in the Imperial city of Frankfort; his Field-Marshal Seckendorf, seeing the French continuing their retreating movement towards the Rhine, pursued by the Slavo-Magyar bands, and entirely abandoning Bavaria, concluded an agreement of neutrality with the Austrians for the troops that remained to him, and retired through Franconia to Philippsburg (the end of June).

At the moment that Broglie quitted Bavaria, his deplorable retreat seemed on the point of being brilliantly avenged by Noailles. King George II. had pushed his army along the Main as far as Aschaffenburg, without knowing the ground: Noailles, stationed on the opposite bank of the Main, prevented the Anglo-Germans from debouching, held them shut up in a kind of blind alley between the river and the arid mountains of Spesshardt, and cut off their supplies from the posts that they occupied on the Main, above and

[1] The same that had long served Austria.

Digitized by Google

below their camp. George II., unable either to advance or to subsist, attempted to turn back (June 27). Noailles was expecting him. Batteries were disposed on the left bank of the Main to overpower the enemy during his defile on the right bank; a French corps crossed the river at Seligenstadt, and ranged itself in line of battle between the river and the heights, behind the village of Dettingen, which covered a ravine through which the enemy must pass to gain the road to Hanau; another corps crossed the Main higher up, and seized Aschaffenburg as soon as the enemy quitted it. The Anglo-German army was like a wolf taken in a snare. Thus far, the greatest general could not have done better. Unfortunately, Noailles, after ordering the corps posted near Dettingen, which was the decisive point, not to stir, but to wait for reënforcements, recrossed the river to observe the movements of the enemy, and to direct the troops left on the other side of the Main. This would have been well had he possessed a lieutenant on whom he could rely; but he had had the weakness to intrust the most important post to his nephew, the Lieutenant-General Duke de Gramont. When Gramont saw the army debouching before Dettingen, he set out like a madman with his division, crossed the village and the ravine, and threw himself between the English and the French batteries on the left bank, which had been pouring grape upon the enemy for three hours. The rest of the advance guard followed Gramont. From that time, the skilful combination of Noailles was utterly destroyed; the soldiers imitated the want of discipline of the leaders; horse and foot charged tumultuously on the heavy masses, which received them in good order, with a fire inferior to that of the Prussians, but better sustained than that of the French infantry. The cavalry of the King's household uselessly displayed a brilliant valor. The infantry, chiefly composed of recruits and militia, disbanded in great part; and no other course was left to Noailles than to throw back this disorderly corps upon the main body of the army, which was still on the other side of the Main. The English crossed, too happy to have conquered a free retreat, and, wholly victorious as they were, abandoned their wounded on the battle-field to the humanity of the French. Nearly twenty-five hundred were killed or wounded on each side.[1]

This action decided nothing; but English and Hanoverian re-

[1] *Campagne du maréchal de Noailles en* 1743, t. I. pp. 235–265; *Mém. de Noailles*, p. 316; D'Espagnac, *Atlas;* Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. II. pp. 22–29; Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. x.

Digitized by Google

enforcements soon reached the enemy. Fifteen thousand Dutch were announced; and the Austrian army that had expelled Broglie from Bavaria was entering Swabia under the command of Prince Charles of Lorraine, the brother-in-law of Maria Theresa. Noailles, threatened with being shut in between George II. and Prince Charles, recrossed the Rhine, and fell back on Speyer, where he found the remnant of the army of Bavaria,[1] then on the Lauter (July–August). The cabinet of Versailles had signified to the Germanic Diet, that, the Emperor having concluded a treaty of neutrality with the Queen of Hungary, the King withdrew his armies from the Empire in order to place no obstacle in the way of a compromise (July 13). England and Austria saw in this conciliatory step only a mark of weakness. The rashest projects were agitated between George II. and Maria Theresa: nothing less was in question than to retake from France, Alsace, Lorraine, and Franche-Comté. It was agreed that King George should attack by the way of Lower Alsace, and Prince Charles by the way of Upper Alsace. The allies, however, lost time, and did not attempt to act until the end of August. They experienced, in their turn, the disadvantages of coalitions. Discord prevailed in the camp of George II., who was, like his father, more German than English, and who excited the jealousy of the proud islanders by his preference for the Hanoverians: on the other hand, the English cabinet, knowing of the attempts made by France to gain anew the King of Sardinia, wished to force Maria Theresa to the territorial concessions necessary to secure Charles Emmanuel. The Queen of Hungary was indignant that her friends should undertake to despoil her like her enemies. She intended that the King of Sardinia should serve her for nothing, and that the English should unconditionally put all their resources at her disposal. The Austrian inheritance, that monstrous fruit of chance, force, and fraud, was, in her eyes, something sacred, which could not be touched without sacrilege. Maria Theresa, so interesting and so magnanimous in misfortune, had showed herself in a different light since prosperity had returned to her: she equalled the Queen of Spain in violence, obstinacy, and indifference to the calamities inflicted by war on the people. She

[1] Of one hundred and twenty thousand Frenchmen that had formed or recruited the first two armies sent to Germany in 1741, thirty-five thousand at most had recrossed the Rhine. The greater part had perished in the hospitals or on the road. Many had been dragged prisoners to Hungary, where they were very harshly treated by the people, who ministered to the vengeance of Maria Theresa.

Digitized by Google

finally yielded, however, as in the Silesian affair. Louis XV. having offered nothing acceptable to the King of Sardinia, an agent of Charles Emmanuel signed, September 13, at Worms, a compact with Austria and England, by which Maria Theresa ceded the part of Milanais west of the Ticino, the part of the territory of Pavia south of the Po, Plaisance, and the portion of the territory of Plaisance west of the Nura. Charles Emmanuel engaged, at this price, to keep on foot forty-five thousand men until a general peace; and England promised him £200,000 a year.

This treaty concluded, King George, who had crossed the Rhine at Mayence, and repaired to Worms, advanced almost to Landau, while Prince Charles attempted to force the crossing of the Rhine near Breisach. The French army, reënforced by regular troops and militia,[1] had been divided between the Marshals de Noailles and de Coigni; Broglie having been at last recalled. Coigni defended the Rhine against Prince Charles. George did not attack Noailles, and only permitted the partisan leader Mentzel to cross the Save with a few thousand hussars, Croats, and Pandours.[2] The ferocious Mentzel preceded his coming by proclamations, in which he summoned to revolt the provinces taken from the Empire by France, and threatened to hang the inhabitants of Lorraine, after forcing them *to cut off their own noses and ears*, if they resisted *their legitimate princes*. Noailles detailed against him a corps of cavalry commanded by Berczynyi: an emigrant Hungarian magnate, of the ancient party of Rakoczi, thus delivered our frontiers from the Austrian brigand. Mentzel was killed by a bullet under the walls of Sarrebrück. The autumn arrived. The allies postponed their projects till the following year, and dispersed their army in winter-quarters from Bavaria to Flanders. They had badly profited by the successful beginning of their campaign, and by the hundred thousand men that they might have had at their disposal in September.

New turns of fortune seemed in preparation for 1744, with a

[1] The regular army had been increased, at the beginning of the year, to about two hundred thousand soldiers; and a levy had been made of at first eighteen thousand, then thirty-six thousand militia. The drafting of the militia was near occasioning great disturbances at Paris, especially in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. It was the first time that militia had been levied in the capital; and the people were justly irritated that the artisans were conscripted, while the *lazy lackeys* were exempted by law. The drafting was full of injustice, arbitrariness, and venality. There are very curious details concerning it in the *Chronique du règne de Louis XV.*, published in the *Revue rétrospective*, t. V.

[2] Servian or Rascian militia between the Save and the Drave.

Digitized by Google

much greater extension of the war. England desired the restoration of Bavaria to the Emperor, on condition that he declared war against Louis XV. in the name of the Empire. Maria Theresa claimed more. She exacted the abdication of the Emperor in order to raise to the Imperial throne her husband, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to whom she had forced the Bavarians to swear allegiance as their sovereign. The despotic pride of the Queen of Hungary, and the depredations committed by the Austrians and the Hungarians on the neutral territories, excited a lively reaction in Germany against Austria; and the King of Prussia, determined to prevent by all means the deposition of the Emperor and the reëstablishment of Austrian supremacy, renewed his correspondence with France.[1] The French nation, which had hitherto taken too lightly the mistakes and humiliations of this war, had begun to be moved and violently irritated by the threats against Alsace and Lorraine. Despite the too wide-spread wretchedness, the public this year applauded the levies of troops, and took the loans. The States of Languedoc offered the King a regiment of dragoons fully equipped; and the enthusiasm was unanimous when it was learned that Louis XV. was about to march in person at the head of his army. An energetic influence acted at this moment on the indolent monarch, and lifted him in some sort out of himself. This salutary influence came from an unexpected quarter,—from a new mistress, who had been at first only a new and more open scandal. Madame de Vintimille had died in childbed at the end of 1741; and her sudden end had produced a strong impression on Louis, and aroused in him the kind of remorse of which he was susceptible,—the fear of hell. He returned for some time, through a partial reformation, to Madame de Mailli alone. This did not last long; and a fourth sister De Nesle, Madame de la Tournelle, a young widow greatly superior in beauty to her elder sisters, succeeded, in turn, to the arms of the King (the end of 1742).[2] The latter did not content herself, like Vin-

[1] The Count d'Argenson had caused their common friend, Voltaire, to be sent to him the year before, to strive to induce him to join again in the war; but this officious mission had been unsuccessful, and the situation had not seemed urgent enough to Frederick.

[2] Fleuri having attempted to protest against this to the King, Louis, it is said, replied to him dryly, that he had given him the care of his business, and not of his person.— *Chronique du règne de Louis XV.*; ap. *Revue rétrospective*, t. V. p. 61. This same chronicle relates that the Jesuit Lémeri, the King's confessor, being unable to give him absolution, proposed to him to *communicate in blank* (with unconsecrated wafers) to save appearances. The King, shocked at the proposal, exiled his confessor

Digitized by Google

timille, with a divided and secret favor: she caused Madame de Mailli to be dismissed, and herself to be declared, so to speak, officially, under the title of the Duchess de Châteauroux. This brilliant and audacious woman, full of imperious grace, inspired Louis for the first time with something beyond the intoxication of the senses. She had that natural loftiness of sentiment that sometimes survives the fall of moral principle in energetic minds. As soon as the King belonged to her, she strove to elevate him, and to make him a man. Those of the ministers and courtiers, who, either through ambition or patriotism, urged him to vigorous resolutions, had no more zealous or useful ally.

It was therefore resolved to attack the enemy boldly, since he refused peace, to reject the puerile equivocations of Fleuri, and to declare war openly in the name of France. Unhappily, the action of the cabinet of Versailles, in becoming bolder and more earnest, did not become more harmonious; and the King continued to listen, now to one, then to another, of his ministers. For instance, Maurepas dictated to him, October 25, 1743, a treaty with Philip V., in retaliation for the treaty signed by the King of Sardinia with Austria and England. By this *family compact*, the Bourbons of France and Spain pledged themselves to an indissoluble union. France promised to declare war against England and Sardinia; to aid Spain in conquering all Milanais and Parma for the Infant, Don Philip; not to treat with England until Gibraltar was restored to Spain, with Minorca, if possible; and to oblige England to relinquish her new colony of Georgia, usurped from Spain. No serious compensation was offered France for the engagements imposed on her,—engagements so grave as to Gibraltar, and so unreasonable as to Lombardy. It was the opposite policy to that of the Regency carried to excess. It is characteristic of Louis XV. that he felt the treaty of Maurepas to be imprudent and ill-conceived, and, nevertheless, signed it.[1] More intelligent negotiations were next entered into with various German princes, under the influence of Noailles. They were progressing, owing to the coöperation of Frederick II.; and the conditions of a league in favor of the Emperor were in agitation, when an unexpected enterprise of the court of France well-nigh broke off every thing. This time Tencin was the instigator. He owed his red hat to the nomination of the Pretender, James III., the *King of England*, as he was styled at Rome; and testified his gratitude by persuading Louis XV. to send an army corps to

[1] *Mém. de d'Argenson*, p. 358.

Digitized by Google

England under the command of the son of James III. The young Charles Edward Stuart arrived secretly in France; and ten thousand soldiers, commanded by Count Maurice de Saxe, were embarked at Dunkirk in January, 1744. The news that France wished to establish Popery in England obstructed the negotiations that had been commenced with the German Protestants; but it was soon learned that the expedition had failed. Contrary winds, then the superiority of the English squadron that was cruising in the Channel, had caused its abandonment (March, 1744).

Meantime, a maritime collision had taken place at the other extremity of France. The English fleet of the Mediterranean, thirty ships of the line strong, eleven of which were three-decked, was blockading in Toulon a Franco-Spanish fleet numbering twenty-seven ships (fifteen French and twelve Spanish). The allies sallied forth from the roadstead, February 19, and, on the 22d, engaged in a battle with the English which remained indecisive. This result was very honorable to the party that was the weaker in ships and guns.[1] The sea remained free until the English had made new efforts to secure the superiority, which our ruined *matériel* did not permit us to imitate. A Franco-Spanish army invaded the country of Nice, and expelled from it the King of Sardinia, despite the aid of the English fleet (April). March 15, Louis XV. declared war against the King of England, the Elector of Hanover. The violation of the agreement of Hanover, the piracies of the English men-of-war, their insults to our ports, and the blockade of Toulon, were the motives alleged. France applauded, transported with anger: the old hatred, which had been appeased to a much greater degree among us than among the English, was again aroused. A like declaration was issued, April 26, against the Queen of Hungary: this was based particularly on the efforts of Maria Theresa to invade and stir up Lorraine and Alsace. Amicable protestations to the Germanic Diet followed these manifestoes; and, May 22, the negotiations with the German princes ended in a compact signed at Frankfort between the Emperor, the Elector Palatine, and the King of Sweden, as Landgrave of Hesse Cassel. Hesse abandoned the English subsidies for the French subsidies, as Denmark had already done. France acceded, June 6, as the guarantee of the treaty of Westphalia. The parties obligated themselves to force the court of Vienna

[1] There had already been some engagements between the French and English navies. Two small French squadrons, attacked by superior forces, had valiantly repulsed the English, — the one near St. Domingo, the other near Gibraltar.

Digitized by Google

to recognize the Emperor, and guaranteed to each other their respective possessions. By another secret treaty between France and Prussia (Versailles, June 5), Frederick promised to invade Bohemia; Louis XV., to send two armies to Bavaria and Westphalia. A part of Bohemia was to be ceded to Prussia: the rest was to belong to the Emperor. France was to have several places in Flanders.[1]

Amelot no longer signed these important agreements as minister of foreign affairs. Madame de Châteauroux had destroyed this passive instrument of Maurepas, her enemy, by causing the King of Prussia to intervene in person: she had inspired Louis with an emulation with respect to Frederick of which he would not have been believed capable; and he had signified that he should thenceforth conduct his foreign affairs himself. He undertook to dispense with a minister of foreign affairs as with a prime minister. Always indifferent to poetry, to the great works of art, to every thing ideal, he had studied in the end, with a kind of curiosity rather than with serious interest, the exact sciences, history, political geography, and especially diplomacy. He therefore passably understood his *affairs:* as to *conducting* them, that was another thing. His indecision and indolence soon threw the burden of diplomacy on the aged Noailles, who was any thing but indolent, but who was almost as wavering as the King. Every thing fluctuated and was protracted, when it should have been vigorously hastened.

Frederick, who was unwilling to declare himself immediately, would have been glad for the French to open the campaign by an attack on Austrian Swabia; but, when the treaty of June 5 was signed, the military operations were commenced far from there, according to plans prepared the year before. The threat of a descent on England had caused the recall to Great Britain of twelve thousand Anglo-Batavians, detached from the army of the Netherlands. This weakening of the enemy was turned to advantage; and it was signified to the States-General that the participation of the Dutch in offensive warfare against France released the King from all engagement relative to the neutrality of the Austrian Netherlands, — a neutrality which, moreover, the States-General did not even guarantee to France. The principal French army, eighty thousand strong, entered Flanders in the middle of May: the King commanded in person, accompanied by the Marshal de Noailles and Count Maurice de Saxe, who had

[1] Flassan, t. V. pp. 187–196; Garden, t. III. pp. 306–312.

Digitized by Google

just received the marshal's bâton, in spite of being a Protestant. This victory over intolerance, a strange contradiction to the redoubling of the persecution against the French Reformers, was due in great part to Noailles, and had cost the King, full of petty prejudices and superstitions, a great effort. Noailles had made Louis comprehend the military superiority of this foreigner, and the necessity of attaching him definitively to France, so destitute of generals!

The enemies were unable to assemble sufficient forces in time to arrest the first successes of the French in Flanders. The attack was commenced between the Lys and the sea: Courtrai was scarcely defended (May 18); Menin was taken June 5; Ypres, on the 25th; Furnes, July 11. The news from the Rhine checked these easy conquests. The army commissioned to defend the Rhine numbered little less than sixty thousand men, including the Bavarians, who had thrown off a neutrality which Austria had not respected: it was not greatly inferior to the Austrian army of Prince Charles and Field-Marshal Traun; but it was commanded by the aged Coigni, who had made injudicious dispositions. Instead of covering Alsace first of all, he had extended his lines towards Worms, commissioning the Bavarian Marshal Seckendorf to guard the Rhine between Speyer and the Lauter. The Bavarians, disheartened by destitution, displayed so little vigilance, that the Hungarians and the Pandours surprised the crossing near Germersheim (June 30). A French corps hastened to the assistance of the Bavarians. There was still time to drive back the enemy's advance-guard into the river: Seckendorf refused to attack, and thenceforth raised suspicions of treason that the sequel would justify. The main body of the enemy crossed, entered Alsace, and carried Lauterbourg and Wissembourg. Coigni, on the point of being cut off from Alsace, opened a passage by retaking Wissembourg by surprise, but could not maintain himself there, and fell back on the Moter, then on Strasburg. The Hungarian, Croat, and Rascian parties inundated Lower Alsace, and penetrated to Lorraine. King Stanislaus was forced to quit Luneville to avoid the risk of falling into their hands: the France of the eighteenth century was encroached upon by an invasion of barbarians.

As soon as the entrance of the enemies into Alsace was known, the King set out with Noailles, and from twenty-five to thirty thousand men, to succor the eastern provinces: the rest of the army of Flanders, about forty-five thousand strong, was left to the Marshal

Digitized by Google

de Saxe, to cover the new conquests and the northern frontier against the English and their allies, who had at last succeeded in assembling in the Netherlands nearly seventy thousand soldiers. The crossing of the Rhine by the Austro-Hungarians effected another reaction in Germany. Louis XV., on reaching Metz August 4, received a cordial letter from Frederick, announcing that he would take the field in the middle of August, and would be before Prague at the end of the month. The fear that France would treat with Austria, and permit Maria Theresa to retake Silesia, had induced him to declare himself sooner than he had promised. His army and finances were recuperated by two years of repose: he could lead eighty thousand soldiers into Bohemia, and leave nearly forty thousand to guard Brandenburg and Silesia. Rumors of victory arrived at the same moment from the Alps, where the Franco-Spaniards, commanded by the Infant Don Philip, and the Prince de Conti, after vainly attempting to penetrate into Piedmont by the mountains of Nice, had turned back towards the Dauphinese Alps, and carried by storm, against the King of Sardinia in person, the formidable barricades of the gorges of the Stura, and the intrenchments of Château Dauphin (July 18–19): these successes were due in great part to the brave Chevert, who had so well assailed and so well defended Prague.

Paris, Versailles, all France, were expecting to learn that the Austrians had paid dearly for their audacity, when far different news burst on them like a funeral knell: "The King is sick; the King is dying!" Louis, who was living in a very intemperate manner, had, in fact, been seized with a putrid fever in consequence of a fit of indigestion.[1] The disease, which declared itself almost immediately after the arrival of the King at Metz, continued to increase daily. August 12, Louis appeared in danger; and an obstinate struggle was entered into between his mistress, who had followed him, and his favorite, the Duke de Richelieu, on the one side, and the chief almoner, Fitz James, Bishop of Soissons, supported by the princes of the blood, the devotees of the court, and public clamor, on the other. The rigid almoner imperiously exacted the dismissal of the King's *concubine* before granting to the sick man the consolations of religion: the Jesuit confessor screened himself behind the Jansenist almoner, satisfied that this severe duty should be fulfilled, but by another. The fear of death and hell conquered. August 14, Madame de Châ-

[1] Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. II. p. 92. According to Voltaire (*Hist. de la Guerre de* 1741, t. II. p. 45), a sunstroke was the origin of the illness.

Digitized by Google

teauroux, and her sister De Lauraguais, received orders to retire fifty leagues from the court. They quitted Metz amidst the imprecations of the populace, who saw in them only types of adultery and incest, and did not know that this king, whose peril they deplored, — this king, the victim, it was said, of fatigues endured for the safety of his kingdom, — owed the little ardor that he had finally shown only to one of those women who were rendered responsible for his vices and past inertia.

Strange scenes took place, during the interval, at Paris and throughout the kingdom. Versailles, then Paris, had been suddenly aroused one night by the news that the Queen was setting out precipitately to join her dying husband. For several days, "Paris, beside itself," says Voltaire, "knew neither time, nor sleeping, nor waking, nor hunger." The multitude besieged the houses of all the officials to question the couriers despatched hourly from Metz, or crowded with sobs and cries into the churches, which were kept constantly open. Some fell ill from the shock. "The poor gave to the poor, saying, 'Pray God for the King!' They carried the money that they received to the foot of the altars." The people unceasingly repeated, "If he dies, it will be through having marched to our aid! He dies just as he is awakening, — just as he is about to become a great king!" August 15, Louis received the last sacraments, and the physician in ordinary left him: a quack made him swallow a prodigious emetic, which convulsed his whole system, and saved him. When it was known, August 19, at Paris, that he was out of danger, the public joy was as extreme as the grief had been; men embraced each other in the streets with cries of delight; there was not a fraternity of artisans that did not sing its *Te Deum*. This was repeated in all our cities. The States of Brittany signalized themselves by erecting on a public square of Nantes a statue of Louis XV. by the celebrated sculptor, Lemoine. A street-poet, Vadé, the ballad-monger of the fish-women, conceived the idea of surnaming the King, *Louis the Well-beloved*; and all France adopted the surname without caring for its origin.[1]

Never had the people of France testified in a more touching manner their goodness of heart, and their readiness to believe in their leaders, and to show them infinite gratitude for the most trifling effort. Already, under the Regency, an illness with which Louis XV. had been attacked in childhood had called forth the

[1] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. xii.; and *Mém. pour servir à la vie de Voltaire*, by himself.

Digitized by Google

most moving demonstrations. The imagination of the populace clung to this son of the unhappy Duke of Burgundy as to an ideal: a little cooled by long expectation, it had kindled anew at the first appearance of moral vitality in the hero of its romance. The language of the manifestoes and proclamations, which lent to the King the maxims of philanthropy dictated by the spirit of the age, had greatly contributed to this. Louis rendered himself justice by his astonishment. "What have I done to be thus beloved?"[1] he exclaimed. And this was all! Another would have passed the rest of his life in making himself worthy of this recompense given before it was earned. The illusion was to be dispelled with terrible rapidity, never more to return. France was like a wife, who, on the eve of an eternal divorce, strives to recall an ungrateful heart by a last outburst of tenderness. The long marriage of the country with the Capetian King, with the State incarnated, was about to be dissolved. We have just witnessed a solemn thing, — the last monarchical burst of enthusiasm of Paris!

The illness of the King had had deplorable military consequences. The anxiety of Noailles reacted on the movements of the army: the troops from Flanders, that debouched into Alsace through the gorges of Willer and Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, were to have effected their junction with the army of Coigni, on the 13th of August, at the north of Strasburg. This junction did not take place until the 17th. The court of Vienna, which saw the storm ready to burst from Brandenburg upon Bohemia, had already despatched orders to Prince Charles to beat a retreat. The two old marshals, much superior to the enemy, might have changed this retreat into a great disaster; but they pressed the Austrians with so little vigor, that the latter stole a march, and recrossed the bridges over the Rhine, at Beinheim, below Fort Louis, almost without loss (August 24). Scarcely had they entered Swabia when they flew to the assistance of Bohemia. It seemed evident that the marshals should have followed them in a body through Germany, placed them between two fires, the French and the Prussian, and sought to terminate the war by a decisive blow. Despite the numerical superiority of the enemies in Flanders, the admirable manœuvres of the Marshal de Saxe had reduced them to powerlessness; and Noailles and Coigni might have hastened into Germany without fearing any thing in that direction. Instead of this, they contented themselves with despatching to Bavaria the Imperial and Hessian troops, supported by a few French detachments, while the main body of the

[1] Voltaire, *Guerre de* 1741, t. II. p. 148.

Digitized by Google

French army was employed in conquering Austrian Swabia for the Emperor. The forest towns of the Rhine were taken; then the fortified town of Freiburg was attacked, which, vigorously defended, cost two months of labor, and thousands of men (the end of September — the end of November). The King, entirely recovered, was present at the greater part of the siege, and ordered the fortifications of Freiburg to be razed, as had been done with those of Menin: both were works of Vauban.[1]

While our forces fatigued themselves with this sanguinary conquest, which sheltered Upper Alsace, but which secured no offensive positions against Austria, Frederick was left without assistance. The Council of Vienna had perfectly combined its system of defence; it had evacuated almost all Bavaria, and massed all its forces under Prince Charles and Marshal Traun. On a new appeal from Maria Theresa to the Hungarian Diet, forty-four thousand men, then thirty thousand more, had taken up arms. All the Magyar and Slavonic provinces were transformed into soldiers: these races were intoxicated with war. In less than three months, Frederick took and lost Bohemia. He had forced Prague to surrender, September 16; then, instead of driving the enemy beyond the mountains that separate Bohemia from the Upper Palatinate or the west, he had moved southward, by the request of the French government, to put himself in communication with Bavaria. This mistake permitted Prince Charles to return to Bohemia at pleasure. Hosts of Hussars, Croats, Pandours, and Tolpachs (Magyar infantry), intercepted all the roads: the peasants, through religious fanaticism inspired by the Jesuits, so powerful in Bohemia, or rather through fear of Austrian vengeance, and anger at Prussian pillage, abandoned their villages, carrying away or burying every thing at the approach of *the heretics*. A void was made about the Prussians, who held nothing but the site of their camp; Saxony, seduced by English gold, declared itself in favor of Maria Theresa, after two and a half years of neutrality; the Austrians, rendered prudent by the remembrance of Mollwitz and Czaslau, avoided battle, and starved out the invaders. Frederick saw himself compelled to abandon his conquest, and lead back to Silesia the dilapidated wrecks of his admirable army (the end of November). The French government, which had so ill repaid his powerful diversion in behalf of Alsace, made him fine promises for the ensuing spring, — sixty thousand men were to be assembled in Bavaria;

[1] Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. II. p. 93; *Lettres du maréchal de Saxe*, t. I. pp. 117–123.

Digitized by Google

and another army corps, that was passing the winter in the Rhenish electorates, was to be despatched to Hanover. Frederick only half confided in them, and remained convinced that the affairs of France would continue to be as badly conducted as in the time of the Cardinal de Fleuri.

At this very moment, however, the cabinet of Versailles made a precious acquisition, which seemed to announce a better destiny to French politics. The King had finally become conscious of the unreasonableness that he had shown in abolishing the ministry of foreign affairs, replaced in fact, and very badly replaced, by a species of committee which was held at the house of the Cardinal de Tencin, and which was ruled by Noailles.[1] November 18, to the great anger of Noailles, Louis called to the secretaryship of foreign affairs the Marquis d'Argenson, the elder brother of the minister of war, and greatly superior to the latter in solidity of character and loftiness of views. The spirit of Chauvelin returned to the ministry with the grateful and devoted pupil of the fallen minister, a pupil as patriotic and more philosophic than his master. The unhappy Chauvelin had at least this consolation in the exile in which he was retained till death by the implacable prejudices of Louis XV. The Marquis d'Argenson scrutinized, with the eye of a thinker and a friend of humanity, not only the external relations, but every part of the government and society. He was a Vauban in integrity, and in simple and profound devotion to the good of the people. Such a choice indicated good diplomatic impulses in the King. Louis, in fact, desired to evade the insane treaty of 1743 with Spain; and the *ultimatum* that he designed to lay down for peace, comprised, as to Italy, the cession of Savoy and Nice to the Infant, Don Philip, in consideration of a compensation in Milanais for the King of Sardinia.[2] This was wholly in the right direction. Events demonstrated the almost utter impossibility of succeeding beyond the Alps without gaining over Charles Emmanuel anew. He had been defeated, first in the mountains of Nice,

[1] The Marquis d'Argenson draws a piquant picture of this committee: "It was the most terrible thing in the world. The thunders of God could not have been heard there. The Marshal (Noailles) *pulled the hair* of every one that disagreed with him in any thing. He stamped his feet, and flung his hat across the room. He changed his principles at every session. M. de Maurepas *yelped*, laughed at every thing, and gave out his epigrams as indubitable maxims of State. Cardinal Tencin had recourse to Moréri for every idea of the most common kind of which he was ignorant; a thing which often occurred. As to the unfortunate Secretary of State, if he had not as good lungs as those who engrossed the conversation, and lacked their effrontery, he remained little more than the recorder of their follies." — *Mém.* p. 354.

[2] Flassan, t. V. p. 238.

Digitized by Google

then in the gorges of the Stura, and lastly under the walls of Coni: nevertheless, the difficulties of the climate and the season had compelled the raising of the siege of Coni; and a long and sanguinary campaign had won the Franco-Spaniards nothing but a few defiles on the Italian side of the Alps.

In Central Italy, where the French did not directly intervene, the war, which had resulted in nothing in 1743, had offered interesting turns of fortune in 1744. The Pope, too weak to insure respect to his neutrality, had seen his whole territory a prey to the two parties. The Austro-Piedmontese had first driven back the Spaniards, through the Romagna and the Marches, to the Neapolitan frontiers, and had made preparations for the invasion of the kingdom of Naples, in coöperation with an English fleet, despite the neutrality imposed on the King, Don Carlos, by the English. The King of Naples, who was expecting this, and who had sheltered his capital as much as possible from a new insult by sea, joined the Spaniards; and the Austro-Piedmontese were, in their turn, driven from the Roman Campagna, and forced back towards the Po.

An alcove revolution followed the cabinet revolution that had called the Marquis d'Argenson to power, and was destined to be as fatal to France as the other might have been salutary. The conversion to morality and family feelings had lasted little longer in Louis XV. than the fear of death: scarcely out of danger, he had given a very cold reception to the young Dauphin, who had hastened to him, without his orders, with an eagerness in which he most unjustly sought to see, not the tenderness of a son, but the impatience of an heir.[1] On his return to Paris, he determined to recall his mistress. The proud Châteauroux obtained a brilliant reparation in the exile of the Bishop of Soissons and the courtiers who had shown themselves most implacable to her. She wished to return to Versailles as to a conquered city: she never beheld it! The agitation and humiliation of her disgrace had planted in her fiery organization the seeds of an inflammatory disease, which the very joy of her recall developed: after several days of delirium, she expired, December 8, 1744.

France did not suspect that this death could be a public calamity. The friend of Châteauroux, and pander in ordinary to the King, the Duke de Richelieu, sought to console Louis by aiding him to complete the series of his incestuous amours. There remained a fifth sister De Nesle: the royal procurer offered

[1] The Dauphin, born in 1729, was fifteen years old.

Digitized by Google

her, in behalf of Louis XV., the inheritance of Châteauroux. She refused. Louis was for some time the aim of all the easy beauties that adorned the court; but the court was conquered by the city,— a plebeian prevailed over the courtesans of rank. There was at Paris a young woman named Jeanne Poisson, the reputed daughter of a bankrupt clerk, but the adopted and perhaps natural child of a farmer-general, who had married her to his nephew, Lenormant d'Étioles. An artistic and literary education, conducted in a strange direction, and with singular art, had developed in her every species of talent, grace, and vanity, while stifling the moral instincts with which Nature, moreover, had very feebly endowed her. Her mother had brought her up like a courtesan of ancient Greece, and had accustomed her to see in the character of the King's favorite the ideal of female ambition. She was then about twenty-three, and had been seeking for two years to attract the attention of Louis XV. A ball given at the Hôtel de Ville on the marriage of the young Dauphin to a daughter of Philip V. at the end of February, 1745, was the occasion of her triumph. She completed, under a mask, a conquest for which she had paved the way by an effective costume. Publicly installed in the inheritance of the unfortunate Châteauroux, she soon concealed her plebeian origin under the title of the Marchioness de Pompadour; and this comedian, skilled in expressing every thing without feeling any thing,— this cold and brilliant being in whom the senses spoke no louder than the heart,— obtained over the King, by her inexhaustible artifices, a more complete and more absolute ascendency than her predecessor had done with her ardent energy. This ascendency, to the shame of France, was destined to survive even the sensual attraction inspired by this woman, and to disappear only with her life. It was a female prime minister in expectancy that arrived at Versailles! Pompadour was destined to reign as long as Fleuri; and what a reign! Great Heavens! — not an idea, not a sentiment, avidity for power without any of the qualities that excuse it, the most frivolous selfishness, the fate of France and of Europe staked in the intrigues of a *soubrette!*

Madame de Pompadour did not, however, leap at once to the summit of power: she needed some time to train herself to *govern.* While the war lasted, she seldom risked herself in the brilliant vortex of military and diplomatic affairs; but she quickly made her sway felt within by the dismissal of the Comptroller-General Orri, who strove to defend against her the traditions of the late cardinal, and to arrest the torrent of profusion into which

Digitized by Google

she precipitated Louis XV., so economical with his first mistresses[1] (December, 1745). Louis thus lost through her the only good quality that he owed to his preceptor, — order, economy. She, however, caused Orri to be replaced by a man of capacity, M. de Machault, who, while yielding to inevitable pecuniary concessions, brought with him enlightenment and bold views, and who was also to be one day destroyed by his protectress.[2]

A grave event which had occurred during the winter of 1744–1745 had modified the situation of Europe: the Emperor Charles VII., undermined by the troubles that had overwhelmed him since his accession to his unhappy greatness, had died of gout in the stomach, January 20, 1745, a sad example to ambitious schemers who have neither the energy nor the talent for their ambition. While Prussia had been prepared so long and so energetically in advance, Bavaria, on the contrary, had been precipitated by its prince into a colossal enterprise, without an army and without money! It seemed as if peace would thereby become more easy. The new Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian Joseph, was a young man of seventeen, whose age excluded him from the Empire; and Maria Theresa might have been granted the so-much-desired election of her husband in consideration of territorial cessions in Italy and the renewal of the cession of Silesia: but neither Maria Theresa, nor the English, her defenders, desired a compromise until France was under their feet. The French government made overtures to the Elector-King, Augustus III., and urged him to offer himself as a candidate for the Empire. Augustus III., who had just riveted the bonds between Saxony and Austria, and accepted subsidies from England and Holland, hesitated.[3] The new minister of foreign affairs, D'Argenson, presented to the King a memorial, in which he demonstrated that the only means of inducing the Saxon to accept the Empire and to make a decisive campaign was for the King himself to lead his principal army into the heart of Germany, and combine his operations with Frederick II., contenting himself with remaining on the defensive in the Netherlands. Louis decidedly rejected this plan, the only reasonable one, and pretended that the Queen of Hungary could only be reached through the

[1] See Lacretelle, t. II. liv. viii.

[2] M. d'Argenson treats him with too much severity in his Memoirs: by way of compensation, M. Droz eulogizes him too much in his *Histoire du règne de Louis XV.*

[3] One hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling: Maria Theresa received seven hundred thousand. England had expended nearly two hundred and seventy-seven millions in 1744. — Voltaire, *Guerre de* 1741, t. II. p. 9.

Digitized by Google

Netherlands, and that this was the sole means of terrifying the maritime powers.[1] Maria Theresa cared very little for the Netherlands: as to the maritime powers, this would have been true, if they had believed Louis XV. to possess sufficient strength and resolution to keep Belgium when he had taken it! The real motive, whether Louis admitted it or not, was, that though he had suffered himself to be persuaded by Madame de Châteauroux, then by Richelieu, that he loved glory and war, he meant that it should be a convenient war, carried on within reach of the frontier,—a siege warfare, in which the French artillerists and engineers, the first in Europe, rendered success almost inevitable.

D'Argenson could thenceforth understand that obstacles would be encountered by any serious policy based upon general ideas. Germany, which should have been this year the principal seat of war, was neglected, while preparations were made to act vigorously in Flanders to satisfy the King, and with considerable warmth in Italy to satisfy the Queen of Spain. The campaign opened therefore, beyond the Rhine, with new reverses. The Field-Marshal Seckendorf, a kind of *condottiere*, without fidelity or honor, who was betraying the Franco-Bavarian cause, had dispersed in widely separated quarters the troops that had recovered Bavaria in the autumn of 1744. As early as the month of March, two Austro-Hungarian corps crossed, the one the Danube, the other the Inn, fell upon the cantonments of the allies, and scattered them like barnyard fowl before the hawk. The Bavarians, demoralized by their leaders, scarcely made any defence; the Hessian auxiliaries laid down their arms; the few thousand French that had entered Bavaria retired, fighting valiantly, accompanied by a small corps of Palatines, and gained Donauwörth and Swabia,—their leader Ségur thus redeemed his unhappy capitulation of Lintz. Seckendorf, sustained by the clamor of a population that demanded the end of its sufferings at any price, imposed on the young Elector an immediate treaty with Austria. The Elector of Bavaria, in consideration of the restitution of his domains, renounced all pretensions to the Austrian States, promised his vote for the election of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and pledged himself to a complete neutrality (April 22). France thus lost the alliance that had drawn her into this unhappy war, and that had cost her prodigious subsidies without bringing her any solid support. The immediate result of the new rout of Bavaria was the definitive refusal of Augustus III. to accept the nomination to

[1] Flassan, t. V. p. 242.

Digitized by Google

the Empire. Augustus also promised his vote to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and concluded a treaty with Austria for the conquest and partition of the Prussian States (May 18). This was easier to say than to do.

The enemies were preparing, therefore, vigorously to push the offensive against Prussia, and to drive the French from Germany. There was still a French army corps in the Rhenish electorates, which held in check or supported the princes of those countries, and influenced the Electoral Diet at Frankfort.

This year was to be fruitful in sudden turns of fortune. Between the loss of Bavaria, and the attack on Silesia by the Austro-Saxons, the fate of Flanders was decided by a great engagement.

The Marshal de Saxe, who had shown himself a truly great general in 1744, and who, with far inferior forces, had prevented the enemy from besieging Lille or attempting any other enterprise, received the chief command for 1745 at a moment when he seemed threatened with another end than the death of a hero. A prey to a dropsy that obliged him to submit repeatedly to the painful operation of tapping, he was succumbing to the excesses which had ruined the prodigious vigor of his constitution. It was doubted whether he would be able to repair to the army. Voltaire could not forbear asking him one day how he could do so in this weak state. "The point in question is, not to die, but to go," replied the marshal. It was a great speech: in certain natures, the height of courage resembles virtue so closely as to be mistaken for it: the effect is the same; the difference is only in the motive.

He set out; and, April 25, from seventy to seventy-five thousand soldiers invested Tournay. The enemy was in a position to keep the field, but had at most fifty-five thousand men. Austria had sent no reënforcements, and left to England and Holland the care of defending Belgium. There were only eight thousand subjects of Maria Theresa in the allied army: the Queen of Hungary, indeed, had despatched an esteemed general, the aged Königsegg, to aid with his counsels the Duke of Cumberland, the second son of George II., and the Prince of Waldeck, who commanded the English and the Dutch. The allies resolved to succor Tournay, and appeared, May 9, in sight of the French army. The King and the Dauphin had arrived at the camp the night before. The Marshal de Saxe had not deemed it incumbent on him to shut himself up in a circumvallation: he had only drawn a line, on

Digitized by Google

the left bank of the Scheldt, from this river to La Mark, and constructed a few earthworks and abatis of trees at the most important points on the right bank, by which the enemy must come. Twenty thousand men were left before Tournay to hold the garrison in check, and at the bridges of the Scheldt to secure a retreat in case of need; and a force almost equal to that of the allies was deployed on the right bank. The right wing rested on the village of Antoin, and was covered by a ravine and three redoubts rudely constructed in haste: the centre had before it the village of Fontenoy, covered by a second ravine, which extended to the wood of Barry. Behind this wood, defended by two redoubts, extended the left wing, towards Ramecroix, Rumignies, and Mount Trinity. A hundred pieces of artillery of different calibers were distributed along the front of the army: the enemy had nearly as many. The position of the French army presented a kind of square, the two extremities of which touched the Scheldt, and which was difficult of attack. Königsegg was of the opinion that the French should be harassed, and a general engagement avoided: the Duke of Cumberland and his Englishmen would listen to no delay.

The cannonade commenced, May 11, at five in the morning. The allies were formed into two army corps, — the Dutch, and the Germans in the pay of Holland, on the left; the English, Hanoverians, and Austrians, on the right. The Dutch attacked Antoin with their left, and Fontenoy with their right: the Anglo-Germans attacked Fontenoy with their left, and sought to turn with their right the redoubts of the wood of Barry. Such a fire of artillery and musketry poured forth from Antoin, Fontenoy, and the redoubts that connected these villages, that the enemies did not go beyond the ravine of Antoin. It was impossible to induce the Dutch to engage the battalions that faced them: the renowned infantry of Malplaquet was no longer at hand. It is true that the cannon had mowed down whole ranks. At the other end of the battle-field, the general that commanded the extreme English right hesitated likewise to enter the wood, and face the redoubts of Barry. The cannonade and fusillade lasted four or five hours, to the great injury of the assailants; and the attack was defeated on both wings. Upon this, Königsegg, again inspired with the desperate daring of his Italian wars, advised the Duke of Cumberland to mass the Anglo-German infantry, and to charge in serried lines on the centre of the French army, between the wood of Barry and Fontenoy. The English infantry this time intrepidly

Digitized by Google

crossed the ravine that separated it from the French, and advanced under a cross fire from Fontenoy and one of the redoubts of Barry. The first line that it encountered was formed of the French Guards and some other infantry. The singular interchange of courtesy that took place between the leaders of the two corps is well known,—"Gentlemen of the French Guards, fire!" "Messieurs Englishmen, we never fire first."[1] It cost the French dear: the first discharge of the enemies, who had twelve cannon among their battalions, swept away the first rank: the rest of the line disbanded. The French Guards, spoiled by lack of discipline and the license of Paris, had greatly deteriorated since Steenkerke and Neerwinden. The centre of the English continued to advance, while their flanks, that were suffering greatly from the fire of Fontenoy and Barry, fell backwards to escape the range of this fire. This movement, and the arrival of some new troops, gave the mass of the enemy the form of a square battalion with three full fronts. The main body of the forces had advanced a few hundred paces beyond Fontenoy and the redoubt of Barry: it was at the very centre of the French army; and its fire, as rapid, as accurate, and as well sustained, as that of the Prussians themselves would have been, overpowered all the corps of cavalry and infantry that came up, valiantly but confusedly, one after another, to encounter it.

The fate of the day seemed doubtful: the Marshal de Saxe, who saw every thing, and dragged himself everywhere on horseback or in a little wicker-carriage, began to make arrangements for a retreat in case a last effort should be unsuccessful, and ordered Antoin to be evacuated. The presence of the King and the Dauphin, and the duty of insuring their safety, became a prodigious embarrassment, and impelled the adoption of timid resolutions, although neither manifested any lack of courage. Had the Dutch returned to the charge in time, and had the manœuvring ability of the English equalled the power of their fire, the battle would have been lost beyond recovery. Happily, confusion prevailed among the English themselves: their square battalion had closed up, and become crowded into a dense column of twelve thousand men, that could no longer advance; and it was

[1] We find, in the *Lettres et Mémoires du maréchal de Saxe* (t. V. p. 299), a forcible memorial against the French infantry's custom of enduring the fire of the enemy without replying, then charging with the bayonet without firing. He shows that it is weakened by every discharge endured, and that it reaches the enemy with a front very inferior to his.

Digitized by Google

necessary for them to open this mass, throw back both wings, in order to carry Fontenoy and the redoubts of Barry, and make way for the cavalry, that was at some distance behind, to sweep the plain.

The time used by the leaders of the enemy in attempting to reëstablish their ranks, and in concerting together, was well employed by Maurice de Saxe: he caused all the disposable forces to converge towards the formidable column, and forbade any regiment to charge alone. The first field-pieces that were found at hand were placed in such a manner as to take the main body of the enemy's forces obliquely:[1] the cavalry was hurled on their front; the infantry, on both their flanks, pell-mell, without order, but with the force of a triple whirlwind. The main body of the enemy was crushed by the shock as in a vice. "The English column," says a military historian,[2] "was overpowered and annihilated." The remnants of it fled precipitately beyond the ravine: they were pursued only to Veson, where they were picked up by the English cavalry and a reserve of infantry. The Dutch, who had at last unsuccessfully attempted a new attack, at the same time effected their retreat. The loss of the allies was from twelve to fourteen thousand men killed, wounded, and taken prisoners. The French had more than seven thousand killed and wounded. Forty guns remained in the hands of the conquerors.

Such was that victory of Fontenoy which so greatly flattered the national spirit, and which has remained so popular. It is curious that the King of France, most a stranger to all heroic sentiment, should have been precisely the only one in modern times to win a great battle in person against the English. This action, moreover, did more honor to the courage of both parties than to their tactics: there was almost as much disorder among the French as rashness and manœuvring incapacity among their enemies. The true glory belonged to the general who had conquered almost in dying; but this, nevertheless, was not one of those sci-

[1] The idea of bringing forward the guns was too simple to be worth all the noise made about it by Voltaire, for the interest of his friend Richelieu, who had communicated to the King this idea suggested by a subaltern officer. Cannon were not lacking; only much more time was needed than at the present day to move them. The large guns were mounted on heavy carriages; the small ones, of four-pound caliber, were dragged by hand. No improvements had yet been made, except in siege artillery.

[2] D'Espagnac, t. II. p. 106. The French Guards washed out their affront at this moment. The fury of the Irish battalions in the service of France was especially remarked.

Digitized by Google

entific battles, those masterpieces of art, of which Frederick bequeathed several examples to posterity.[1]

The strong Austro-Batavian garrison of Tournay surrendered the town, May 22, but continued to defend the citadel, one of the principal works of Vauban, until June 19. This central bulwark of Flanders once fallen, the rest fell almost without an effort. The enemy was absolutely unable to dispute the campaign with the French army, which had just been again reënforced by a large corps drawn from the army of Germany. The Marshal de Saxe, become omnipotent by his victory, cared only for his own share of the war, and not for the war in general. During the night of July 10, a French corps scaled the ramparts of Ghent, after dispersing, on its way, six thousand Anglo-Hanoverians. Ghent made no resistance, and was not pillaged. July 18, Bruges opened its gates to a simple detachment: Audenarde surrendered July 21; Dendermonde, August 12; Ostend, August 23; Nieuwpoort, August 30; Ath, October 8. At autumn, the French were masters of the whole country between the Dender and the sea. All these renowned places were greatly neglected, and in bad repair, in consequence of the prolonged quarrels maintained between Austria and Holland with respect to their administration. The superiority of the French in siege warfare, moreover, was contested by no one. Artillery and engineering, as yet, formed, nowhere but in France, true scientific bodies that improved in peace the instruments of war: the other parts of the military art had unfortunately progressed among us in an inverse direction.

Louis XV. was received in triumph at Paris. The minister of foreign affairs had none the less been right in his memorial to the King;[2] for Germany had been lost in taking Flanders. The Prince de Conti, who commanded the French troops on the Main, weakened by the large detachment that had been taken from him for the army of the King, either could not or did not know how to maintain himself beyond the Rhine till the end of the campaign: he recrossed to the left bank; and, September 13, the Electoral Diet of Frankfort, rid of a threatening proximity, elected the husband of Maria Theresa Emperor, under the title of Francis I. The Empire entered the new House of Austria for the time that remained for it to live. The three ecclesiastical electors had been

[1] *Lettres et Mémoires du maréchal de Saxe*, t. I. pp. 165–236; D'Espagnac, t. II. p. 50 *et seq.*; Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. xv.; Frederick II., *Hist. de Mon Temps*, t. II. ch. xii.

[2] See *ante*, p. 253.

Digitized by Google

gained over anew by Austria. The votes of Saxony and Hanover completed the majority: the King of Prussia, Elector of Brandenburg, and the Elector Palatine, protested in vain. The object that had drawn France into the war, the withdrawal of the Empire from the hands of Austria, had, therefore, definitively failed. This grave political repulse was not the only consequence of the plan of operations chosen by Louis XV. The King of Prussia, abandoned to his own resources, made the most admirable campaign that had been witnessed since Turenne. Having reorganized a military force of more than a hundred and twenty thousand men, he expelled the Austro-Saxons from Silesia by a great victory (June 4), pursued them into Bohemia, defeated them there anew (September 30); then, threatened in Berlin itself by a diversion attempted by his enemies, he forced them back on Dresden, whence Augustus III. took flight. The aged Prince of Anhalt, the creator of the Prussian infantry, crowned his career by overpowering the Saxons with a part of Frederick's army, before the Austrians could succor them (December 15); but Frederick had accumulated victories only to force his adversaries to peace. Receiving neither soldiers nor subsidies from the French government, which had lavished so much blood and treasure on useless allies, and which was not sagacious enough to preserve one so formidable, Frederick felt Prussia panting under him like a hardy but short-breathed courser, and knew that it could not provide for a third campaign without ruining itself: he feared, moreover, the Russian intervention in favor of Augustus III., who had a defensive compact with the Czarina. As soon, therefore, as Maria Theresa, bowing under this series of reverses and the pressure of English diplomacy, consented to renew the cession of Silesia, peace was quickly concluded (December 25). Frederick treated for the Palatinate and for Hesse at the same time as for himself, and recognized the Emperor Francis I. France found herself, therefore, without a single ally in Germany; and the peace of the Empire restored to Maria Theresa the disposal of forces that she knew how to employ efficiently in Italy, — a country which interested the Austrian government far more than Belgium.

The campaign of 1745 had been unfortunate in Italy for Austria and Piedmont. The Count de Gages, who commanded the Hispano-Neapolitans in the Pontifical States, crossed the Apennines, precipitated himself upon Liguria from the territory of Modena, and effected his junction in the territory of Genoa with the Franco-Spanish army of the Infant, Don Philip, and the Mar-

Digitized by Google

shal de Maillebois (April–June, 1745). The Genoese had just grievances against Maria Theresa. The Emperor Charles VI. had formerly sold to them the marquisate of Finale; and now Maria Theresa, by her last treaty with Charles Emmanuel, pretended to cede to the crown of Sardinia that domain, the price of which had been received by her father. Among private individuals, this would have been called aggravated robbery. Besides, they knew that the maritime powers were aiming to deprive them of Corsica. The Genoese declared themselves in favor of France and Spain, and furnished to their new allies, in consideration of a subsidy paid by Spain, ten thousand soldiers and an excellent park of artillery. Maillebois and Gages made a new descent from Liguria into Montferrat with seventy thousand men. Charles Emmanuel, and the Austrian General Schulemberg, who had only fifty thousand, after uselessly disputing the outlet from the Apennines, took up a good defensive position at Bassignana, in the angle formed by the confluence of the Tanaro and the Po. The Franco-Spaniards strove to dislodge them by diversions, and extended their lines on the right. Maillebois took Tortona: a large Spanish corps occupied Plaisance and Parma, which joyfully welcomed the soldiers of Elizabeth Farnese, then fell back on Pavia. The enemy did not stir. The Spanish corps moved on Milan; then, at last, the Austrians, on the point of being cut off from the Tyrolean Alps, separated from the Piedmontese to hasten to Milan; the Spaniards quickly fell back, and rejoined the French; and the whole body of the allies burst upon the King of Sardinia, who was overpowered and forced back on Casale (the end of September). Alessandria, Valenza, Casale, and Asti were carried in a few weeks, with the exception of the citadel of Alessandria, which the French blockaded. The English fleet had endeavored to make a diversion by bombarding Savona, Finale, San Remo, and Genoa itself, but with no other result than to draw down upon England the execration of the Ligurian people. The government of Louis XIV. had unhappily set more than one example of such acts; but a historian (Sismondi) remarks with reason, that the English government had alone reduced to a system these violations of the law of war, which admits of bombardment only as an extreme resource to force a besieged city to surrender: the law of humanity on its side would admit of it only against citadels, — against purely military places.

The French had taken up their winter-quarters in Piedmont. The Spaniards should have done the same in order to

Digitized by Google

attack Turin in the spring: the fate of the war was to be decided in Piedmont, and not in Milanais. But the Spanish general was forced to follow, instead of the inspirations of his intellect, the extravagant wishes of his Queen. Elizabeth understood only one thing,—the immediate seizure of Milanais in her son's name; and the Count de Gages was obliged to proceed directly to Milan, with troops too fatigued immediately to attack the castle of this city and the other strongholds into which the Austrians had withdrawn (December 19). To extend his lines in this manner was evidently endangering himself at the reopening of operations.[1]

The battles of Flanders, Germany, and Lombardy, had not been the most memorable events of 1745,—that year so full of such. An extraordinary episode complicated the European conflict, shook the throne of England, and paved the way for new successes of the French in Belgium, by recalling across the Channel a part of the forces that might have defended the rest of the Austrian Netherlands. The son of the Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, had remained in France, greatly neglected by the government, since the abortive descent of March, 1744. This young man, a singular mixture of vulgar faults and heroic virtues, embarked intrepidly, with a few friends and some arms and munitions, on two vessels furnished by a ship-owner of Nantes, and made a descent on Scotland by the way of the Hebrides (July, 1745). It is well known how, with a handful of those Scotch Highlanders who had preserved to the eighteenth century the language, manners, customs, and arms of the Gaels, our first ancestors, he entered Edinburgh, defeated a small English force, and advanced within forty leagues of London (September–December). It is also known what was the singular attitude of the English people; no one joining the Pretender, and no one opposing him: the Jacobites and the Tories on the one hand, the Whigs and the Hanoverians on the other, seeming to wait passively for a few thousand semi-savage Scotchmen, and a few thousand Dutch or German soldiers, to decide the fate of Great Britain,—an astonishing absence of military spirit in a people that had formerly been so infuriated in civil war, and that still showed itself so brave under the banners of the war on the Continent. The stupor caused by the audacity of the youthful Stuart, and the absence of sympathy for the Hanoverian race, so contemptible in its man-

[1] *Campagnes du maréchal de Maillebois en* 1745–46, t. II., *Journal militaire; Mém. de Noailles*, p. 350. Noailles, with little probability, accuses Maillebois of having counselled the Spaniards to go to Milan.

Digitized by Google

ners, explain this public inertia. England would doubtless have awakened at the decisive moment. However this may be, any assistance of importance sent by France to the Scotch would at least have resulted in rendering the struggle long and doubtful, and in paralyzing the action of England abroad: but the superiority of the English fleets rendered the sending of this extremely difficult; and Louis XV. did not employ much zeal in the attempt, through the fear of displeasing the Protestants of Germany, — and this at the moment when he lost by his own fault the only powerful ally that he had among them. To sacrifice at once Germany and Scotland was to cut off both hands.

At the beginning of 1746, a show was made of sending the Duke de Richelieu across the Channel with an army corps: but this was discouraged by the first obstacles; and the Scotch Highlanders, driven back into their country by the Anglo-German forces returned from the Netherlands, were utterly routed at Culloden (April 27, 1746) by the vanquished general of Fontenoy, Cumberland, before Richelieu had made any serious attempt to embark. The English pride, so cruelly wounded, revenged itself by atrocities which cover with eternal shame the government and the army of the Hanoverian dynasty. The barbarous Gaels of Scotland had waged war like civilized men; the Anglo-Germans used a victory due to numbers like savages intoxicated with blood. The frenzy of that reaction, which carried murder, rape, and arson throughout the Highlands, was succeeded by political measures which destroyed the antique social constitution of the Scottish tribes. This was the only corner of the world that had hitherto preserved almost entire the image of primitive Gaul; the tribe system having been destroyed among the other nations that remained faithful to the Celtic language and a part of the Celtic customs, — the Britons, Welsh, and Irish. The little Scottish Gaul, in perishing with glory, astonished and strongly moved the imagination of France, and of England herself; and the Celtic traditions revived with éclat in erudition and poetry[1] at the moment when the living example of these traditions disappeared. Later, they were destined to blend with the politics of the French Revolution, and to assume the character of a veritable Renaissance, in opposition to the Roman and Germanic traditions.

[1] The legends of *Arthur* had revealed Kimric poetry to the Middle Ages. The mythical Ossian, the apocryphal representation of a real bardic cycle, disclosed to the eighteenth century a still more ancient stratum of traditions, — Gaelic poetry. It will be remembered to what a degree Ossian fired imaginations at the epoch of the Revolution.

Digitized by Google

While the Christian nations were rending each other from the Oder to the Apennines and the mountains of Scotland, the power that it had been customary to regard as the common enemy of Christendom made a remarkable attempt to reëstablish peace therein. The Sultan, Mahomet V., at the instigation of the Pacha Bonneval, offered his mediation, through the Grand Vizier, to the ministers of the Christian powers at Constantinople.[1] His intervention was religious as well as political. He proposed, if the Grand Pontiff of the Christians would send one of his *apostles* to bear to the congress his pacific exhortations, to send thither likewise a *dervish* designated by the Mufti. This strange lesson of tolerance and humanity was ineffectual. Austria and England refused to accept the Ottoman mediation. Bonneval then instigated the Sultan to offer his offensive alliance to the House of Bourbon. Noailles caused the rejection of this offer by a memorial to the King, in which he alleged reasons worthy of the Middle Ages. He pretended that the alliance of a Most Christian King with the enemy of the Christian name, for the purpose of waging an offensive war against Christians, would forever tarnish the name of the King, and would rouse the indignation of all Europe against him, and that God would not bless his arms,—language and sentiments evidently conventional in an old courtier of the Regency (the end of 1745). The true motive, which he indicated, moreover, was the fear of drawing forth a declaration of war from the Empire and Russia (January, 1746).[2]

The minister of foreign affairs, who, more truly religious than Noailles, had not, however, the same abhorrence of an alliance with the *infidels*, sought, during the interval, other diplomatic combinations, to prevent the number of the enemies of France from increasing, to plan the war under better direction, and to shape the future beyond the present conflict. With respect to Germany, the point in question was to restrain the new Emperor from involving the Empire in his war; a thing difficult, and long unexampled. The amicable protestations of the cabinet of Versailles to the Germanic Diet, the withdrawal of the French forces from the Rhenish electorates, and the active coöperation lent by

[1] "Is it not shameful," says the Vizier, "that you Christians, who wish to pass for the true believers, should have banished from among you all spirit of peace; and that we Mussulmans, whom you call *infidels*, should see ourselves obliged to inspire you with sentiments that you ought to possess already?" The injury suffered by Ottoman commerce was one of the reasons by which he justified his master's interference. — See Flassan, t. V. p. 252.

[2] *Mém. de Noailles*, p. 348.

Digitized by Google

Prussian diplomacy to French diplomacy, induced the Diet to maintain the neutrality of the Empire, despite the desperate efforts of Francis I., or rather of Maria Theresa; for Francis of Lorraine, weak in mind and character, was never any thing more than the husband of the Empress Queen. This important success had been shaped and was consolidated by private compromises with divers German princes. Augustus III., no longer having any thing to fear from Prussia or to hope from Austria since the peace with Frederick II., sold his neutrality for three years, as Elector of Saxony, for two millions a year. Analogous treaties had been concluded with the Palatine, the Elector of Cologne, and the Duke of Würtemberg; and the treaty of subsidies had been renewed with Denmark (March–April, 1746). The young Elector of Bavaria, by way of compensation, had not been ashamed to sign a treaty of subsidies with Austria and England against that French government which had made so many sacrifices for his father.

The reconciliation between France and Saxony was of vast scope in the designs of D'Argenson, and extended beyond the War of the Austrian Succession. It was not only from Austrian influence, but also, and above all, from Russian influence, that D'Argenson wished to withdraw the House of Saxony. For two generations, Russia had made use of the Saxons to humiliate and repress Poland. D'Argenson thought that if France supported the House of Saxony instead of opposing it, and aided it to render itself hereditary in Poland, while urging a modification of the constitutional laws, the Saxon princes, being no longer in need of the Russians, would become naturalized, and would form a barrier against Russia, instead of being her docile instruments. This conception was the more remarkable, inasmuch as D'Argenson, minister of a king as he was, was at heart far from monarchical, and may pass, in our political history, for the intermediate link between Fénelon and Rousseau; being nearer the latter than the former in more than one respect:[1] but, in point of fact, he thought that any thing was preferable to the anarchy which was destroying Poland. The greatest obstacle to his designs was the personal unworthiness of the Saxon princes,—a degenerate race that contrasted pitiably with the strength and greatness of the House of Brandenburg, its neighbor and rival.

The projects of D'Argenson, as to Poland, regarded the future:

[1] We shall speak hereafter of the book in which he has set forth his political theories.

Digitized by Google

as to Italy, it was at once the present and the future that he designed to regulate by a brilliant turn of fortune. He had resumed, completed, systematized, and induced the King to adopt, the admirable plan of Chauvelin, set forth in treaties with Sardinia and Spain in 1733, then abandoned by Fleuri.[1] To organize Italy into a confederation, with a permanent diet, in imitation of Germany; to expel Austria entirely; to deliver all the Italian States from every bond of vassalage to the so-called *Holy Roman Empire;* solemnly to renounce forever, in the name of France, all pretensions to any thing beyond the Alps; to *Italianize* the foreign princes settled in Italy by the interdiction to possess any thing outside the Peninsula, — such were the general outlines of this noble design. The War of the Austrian Succession had been entered into by the policy of *expediency;* that is, by the right of the strongest or the most crafty. D'Argenson designed to continue it by the policy of principles in the name of the right of nations to national independence. D'Argenson, too little known as a diplomatist, — for he merely appeared for an instant in this government, unworthy of being served by such a man, — D'Argenson is, in our history, the link between the ancient French policy of the European balance of power and the modern philosophic law of nationalities, — between Richelieu and the Revolution. It is the duty of history to rehabilitate this link in a glorious chain.

The only means of realizing these designs was to treat secretly with the King of Sardinia, and afterwards to impose the treaty already prepared on Spain; for it was impossible otherwise to make Elizabeth Farnese renounce the absurd agreement of October, 1743. Louis XV. comprehended this, and authorized D'Argenson to negotiate without the knowledge of the other ministers and of Spain. Unhappily, the King of Sardinia was not a man of superior mind. He was not struck as he should have been by this great conception, of which his house would have had the chief advantage. His engagements to Austria and England were not what restrained him; but he feared lest France might not have the energy and perseverance to exert pressure enough on Spain to force her to renounce Milanais: it must, moreover, be acknowledged that only too much foundation had been given for this distrust in the war of 1733. He yielded, however, when it was proved to him that Louis XV. personally entered fully into the views of his minister, and had drawn up with his own hand the plan for the partition of Italy. December 26, 1745, secret

[1] See *ante*, p. 166.

Digitized by Google

preliminaries were signed at Turin. The King of Sardinia was to have Milanais, with the exception of Cremona, Tortona, and Voghera, which were to be added to the Duchy of Parma, the share of the Infant, Don Philip. Mantua was to be given to the Republic of Venice: Genoa was to have Oneglia and the Imperial fiefs of Liguria. On the recurrence of peace, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany was to be transferred from the Emperor to his brother, Prince Charles of Lorraine, provided that the latter renounced all pretensions outside of Italy. There was but a single objection to be made to this compact; namely, that it was shocking that, in an organization based on the principle of nationality, a French province, Savoy, should have remained annexed to an Italian State. But D'Argenson's policy was a little too disinterested: he said, like Sully before him, "France is large enough." According to the same principles that D'Argenson applied to Italy, it could not, however, be affirmed that France was *large enough* until it had been completed so far as was possible without violating another nationality. In the existing circumstances, D'Argenson, however, had very good excuses to give.

The preliminaries of Turin were immediately sent to Madrid. The King of Sardinia was to affix his signature to the definitive treaty as soon as it had been signed by the King of Spain. The preliminaries were received at the Spanish court with a burst of clamor and insult, and an unequivocal refusal. D'Argenson, nevertheless, maintained Louis in his resolution; but the conclusion of the armistice between France and Sardinia was protracted by difficulties of minutiæ, to the great vexation of D'Argenson, who felt that every day lost might be irreparable. The Spaniards were superior in force to the French in Italy, in consequence of the mania of concentrating every thing in Flanders; and the latter were not in a condition to dictate the law to them: they were also arrested by this consideration. The armistice was not signed at Paris till February 17, 1746, when the Count de Maillebois, the son of the Marshal and the son-in-law of D'Argenson, set out for the embassy of Turin with the armistice in his pocket. Delayed by the necessity of receiving instructions from the minister of war, then stopped by the snows in the Alps, he did not arrive at Rivoli, near Turin, till March 3. Meanwhile, the Queen of Spain, understanding at last that she was about to lose every thing through having been unwilling to yield any thing, reluctantly gave her consent with bitter rancor. It was too late. Maria Theresa, immediately after the treaty of peace with the King of Prussia, had

Digitized by Google

despatched thirty thousand men by forced marches to Lombardy; and the King of Sardinia, believing Spain inflexible, not daring to confide in the firmness of Louis XV., and seeing his citadel of Alessandria on the point of falling, through famine, into the power of the Franco-Spaniards, had yielded to the entreaties of the Austrians, and concerted with them the resumption of operations. March 5, the Piedmontese suddenly invested Asti, an unfortified town occupied by nine French battalions: this corps, through the weakness of its leader, surrendered itself prisoner on the 8th, just as the Marshal de Maillebois was hastening to its aid. This reverse caused the evacuation of Alessandria on the 10th: on the 19th the Spaniards evacuated Milan to avoid being captured there by the new Austrian army that had descended from the Tyrol. The great design had failed. Charles Emmanuel had destroyed with his own hand, and despite himself, the future of his house and of Italy. Although the Austrians now exerted a pressure on Piedmont by the presence of considerable forces, it would not perhaps have been impossible to renew the negotiation with the King of Sardinia; but Louis XV. no longer desired it. Humiliated that a petty prince like Charles Emmanuel should have subjected him to the repulse of Asti, he had suffered himself to be gained over anew by the abettors of the Queen of Spain, joined by the aged Noailles, who was jealous of D'Argenson. Thenceforth he chose to "crush the King of Sardinia rather than supplicate him," to use his own words to the minister of foreign affairs; and sent Noailles as ambassador extraordinary to Madrid to effect a reconciliation with the court of Spain. The disgrace of D'Argenson from that time became probable.[1]

The war of Italy was no longer any thing but a series of mistakes and reverses. It was desired to prosecute the war with the utmost vigor, yet the allied armies received scarcely any reënforcements: the French, because Louis XV. was again accumulating in Belgium all the troops at his disposal; the Spaniards, because Spain lacked both men and money. As it was, these armies might still have defended themselves. The Count de Gages, who commanded the Spaniards, was an excellent general, and the Marshal de Maillebois was not without merit: unrestricted in their movements, these two leaders might have concentrated their forces on Pavia, Valenza, and Tortona, with the territory of Genoa in their rear; but the Queen of Spain meant that they should defend her

[1] D'Argenson, p. 366, *et seq.*; Noailles, p. 362; Flassan, t. V. p. 315.

Digitized by Google

inheritance, the Duchy of Parma, at any price. The commander of the corps that occupied the territory of Parma, in order to pay court to the Queen, disobeyed the Count de Gages, and refused to evacuate Parma; the Infant, Don Philip, did not sustain the general-in-chief, and the most deplorable confusion ensued among the Spaniards. The Austrian army forced them to abandon Parma: instead of falling back on the French, who were disputing with the Piedmontese the confines of Montferrat and Liguria, they stopped at Plaisance, were in some sort blockaded there by the Austrians, and summoned the French to their aid. Maillebois was forced to obey the Infant, the generalissimo of the combined armies, and to abandon his communications in order to hasten to Plaisance. The Piedmontese followed the French. The Franco-Spaniards precipitately attacked the Austrians during the night, for the purpose of anticipating the arrival of the Piedmontese. The attack, badly conducted on ground which the Spaniards had not taken the pains to reconnoitre, was repulsed, with great carnage on both sides (June 16). The combined army, shut in between the two armies of the enemies that were reducing it to famine, escaped them by crossing the Po, and going to subsist at the expense of Milanais (the end of June); then, having drawn the Piedmontese and a part of the Austrians to the north of the Po, it recrossed this river near Plaisance, opened a way for itself by a victory over the Austrian army corps left on the right of the Po (August 10), and fell back on Tortona, to be nearer the Genoese territory. The fruit of this admirable manœuvre, due to the Count de Maillebois, the son of the Marshal, was snatched from the allied generals by a political event that had just modified the situation of Europe. Philip V. had died July 9; and his successor, Ferdinand VI., the second son of his first wife, was a stranger to the passions and interests of his widow. Ferdinand showed a selfishness as brutal as that of his step-mother in an inverse direction: he hastened to despatch a new general to the Spanish army, with orders to lead it back instantly to Nice, without caring what would become of the Genoese, the object of so much resentment on account of the coöperation that they had lent to France and Spain. Maillebois should have thrown himself into Genoa to preserve France from partaking the shame of the Spaniards; but he thought it his duty to follow Don Philip, himself constrained to obey the King, his brother. The combined army retired precipitately along the Ligurian coast, followed and harassed by the Piedmontese; and did not even maintain itself

Digitized by Google

in the county of Nice, but recrossed the Var, September 17. As early as the 6th, Genoa, terrified by the abandonment of her allies, and wedged between the Austrian army and the English fleet, opened its gates to the Austrians.[1]

While Italy and Scotland were lost, the army of the Netherlands, where the most formidable means of action were accumulated, was winning brilliant and easy successes. The Marshal de Saxe, scarcely recovered from his illness, had suddenly invested Brussels in mid-winter; and the capital of the Austrian Netherlands had been forced to capitulate at the end of three weeks. A Dutch army corps of twelve thousand men had been made prisoners of war (January 28–February 21). At the beginning of May, the King put himself at the head of ninety thousand soldiers. The enemy's army, which had assembled on the Demer, was absolutely unable to dispute the field, despite the reënforcements that Maria Theresa had finally decided to despatch to Belgium. The presence of the King was not only useless, but injurious: the embarrassment of a court-army prevented Maurice de Saxe from pressing the enemy as vehemently as he would have done, and forcing him to the mouths of the Scheldt.[2] The enemy had time to retire to Breda, and the French army fell back on Antwerp; the city was not defended; the citadel surrendered May 30. The Dutch were greatly terrified at seeing the French able to injure their commerce by reopening the Scheldt; and, had the diplomacy been well conducted at that moment, they might have been induced to do any thing to impose peace on their allies. They offered to secure the cession of Tuscany to the Infant, Don Philip, in exchange for his pretensions to Parma and Milanais. The influence of D'Argenson was already paralyzed by that of Noailles and the court of Spain, and the great reverses in Italy had not yet been experienced: the King rejected these proposals, and commissioned his generals to complete the conquest of Belgium.

The Marshal de Saxe held in check Prince Charles of Lorraine, who commanded the enemies, increased by the Anglo-German troops returned from Scotland and some new Austro-Hungarian corps; while the Prince de Conti took Mons July 10, Huy July 21, and Charleroi August 2, with a part of the French army. The Marshal de Saxe then forced the enemies from Namur upon Liege, and caused Namur and its citadels to be besieged in his rear: they sur-

[1] *Campagnes de Maillebois*, t. II.; *Lettres du maréchal de Saxe*, t. II.

[2] See what the Marshal de Saxe says of this to the Chevalier de Folard. — *Lettres du maréchal de Saxe*, t. II. p. 190.

Digitized by Google

rendered September 19–30. From fifteen to sixteen thousand prisoners were taken in these places. Namur taken, the Marshal de Saxe united all the French forces, and assailed Prince Charles on the plateau of the left bank of the Meuse, between Liege and Visé. Raucoux, and three other villages which covered the enemies' front, were carried by main force after a murderous conflict; the Bavarians, whose sovereign had so ill requited the benefits of France, were cut to pieces by the French; and Prince Charles was thrown back in disorder on his bridges over the Meuse. Night prevented this defeat from becoming an utter rout. The enemies had lost from seven to eight thousand men and fifty cannon; the French, from three to four thousand men. The battle of Raucoux had no other result than to prevent the enemies from wintering in the province of Liege, and is worthy of remembrance only for the great forces that were displayed in it (the French had more than a hundred thousand men; the allies, eighty thousand), and for the skilful use made of the artillery by the Marshal de Saxe; each of the attacking columns having been provided with a powerful battery that advanced with it. Victors and vanquished went into winter-quarters. The whole country between the Meuse and the sea was in the power of the French: of all the Netherlands, nothing remained to Austria but Luxembourg and Limbourg. What an admirable text for the court and the gazette! Louis the *Well-beloved* had effected conquests refused to Louis the Great! Under Richelieu and under Louis XIV., it is true, the conquests were in earnest: each town taken was another step towards the natural frontiers, a new page in the book of the national destinies. To-day it was nought but the pageantry of war, theatrical triumphs, blood shed with no other aim than to conquer, with peace, the vapor of a vain fame.

It was, moreover, any thing but flattering to the national pride to owe these successes to a foreigner. Again: this foreigner, this Saxon bastard, had for his principal lieutenant another foreigner, a Danish bastard, the Count de Lowendahl, a man of merit, who had been trained by commanding the Russian armies under Marshal Münnich. No more generals were trained among us. The chief cause was the extinction of hard study and vigorous thought among the higher nobility; we have indicated elsewhere the special cause in the organization of the army.[1]

The French were masters of Belgium; but France was invaded

[1] According to Saint-Simon, whom Mirabeau forcibly confirms. — See *Mém. de Mirabeau*, t. I. liv. i., and *Correspondance de Saint-Simon*.

Digitized by Google

at two points,—Brittany, then Provence. At the end of September, an English squadron had landed in the Bay of Poulduc six thousand soldiers, who marched on Lorient in order to destroy the settlements and carry off the magazines of the Indian Company. The place was but half fortified, and was only defended by some hastily assembled militia. The commander capitulated. Happily, as he was about to deliver up the place, the English imagined that he was laying a snare for them, and was preparing to burst upon them with superior forces: seized with a panic, they reëmbarked, carrying away nothing but ridicule of their expedition (October 7–8).

The attack against Provence seemed more formidable. It was again the English that had caused it to be decided upon; for the Austrians, once masters of Genoa, would have far rather gone to conquer Naples. The position was critical. The Neapolitans had reëmbarked for their country; the greater part of the Spaniards had repaired by the way of Dauphiny to Savoy, the last possession left to Don Philip; the French army, melted away by battle, sickness, and desertion, numbered only twelve thousand men, besides a few Provençal militia; and the King of Sardinia was advancing with forty thousand Austro-Piedmontese, supported by the English fleet. It was not in a condition to dispute the crossing of the Var; and the Marshal de Belle-Isle, who reappeared at last in this war opened by him, and whom the cabinet had given Maillebois for a successor, thought himself obliged to fall back to Puget, four leagues from Toulon (the end of November). Half of Provence was abandoned to the fury of the Croats and the Pandours.

A great event prevented the enemy from profiting by the time that elapsed before the arrival of the reënforcements despatched from the army of Flanders. The conquerors of Genoa had cruelly abused their easy success. "The Austrians," says D'Argenson, "excelled in the cowardly and useful quality of unrelentingly pursuing their vanquished enemies." This quality is not always *useful*, as the Austrians experienced. Maria Theresa had treated the Genoese as the most rigorous sovereign would scarcely treat rebellious subjects:[1] she exacted of them ruinous contributions,

[1] "The Empress-Queen," says a historian, "was devoid of pity: no sovereign, perhaps, has caused more wide-spread desolation; has treated the conquered, or even neutral nations, invaded by her armies, with more barbarity, or has opposed a colder indifference to their prayers and lamentations."—Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, t. XXVIII. p. 411. Maria Theresa, indeed, possessed the family virtues, and strong affections for what surrounded her; but her narrow and harsh devotion was associated with scarcely any sentiment of humanity, and was no restraint on her favorite passion, vengeance.

Digitized by Google

which did not spare the conquered population the extortions and insults of an unbridled soldiery. The Austrian commander, Botta-Adorno, the son of a Genoese refugee, threatened, at the least resistance, to burn the city, and massacre the inhabitants. The English, meanwhile, continued to intercept and pillage the Genoese ships, although Genoa had submitted, and there was no longer any war. The energetic people of Genoa lost patience. December 5, as the Austrians were carrying away the heavy artillery of the city, which they designed for the siege of Toulon, some soldiers attempted to force the passers-by with blows to harness themselves to a mortar. A shower of stones put them to flight: it was the signal for revolt. For five days, this brave people, without guides, without leaders,— for the rich men and the nobles remained shut up in their palaces,— fought infuriatedly in the labyrinth of the streets, on the steep parapets, and around the gates, of Genoa. December 10, Botta fled with his garrison, diminished five thousand men, and recrossed the Apennines. The Austrian detachments scattered along the Ligurian coast were hemmed in and taken by the mountaineers, roused to insurrection.

Genoa, in freeing itself, had liberated Provence. The Austro-Piedmontese and the English, deprived of siege-artillery, and disturbed by what had occurred in their rear, dared not advance on Toulon, and could not even take Antibes. January 21, 1747, the Marshal de Belle-Isle, strongly reënforced and become equal to the enemies, resumed the offensive at all points. The Austro-Piedmontese could not sustain the shock, and hastened to recross the Var (February 2). Their expedition had failed, like every attack directed against France on the south-east; but this time a foreign diversion had greatly contributed to it. France was not, at least, ungrateful to Genoa. Reparation was made for her shameful neglect of this courageous ally; and from February to May, in spite of the English cruisers, engineers, arms, troops, and a general, were sent to Genoa, that aided the Genoese to sustain themselves till the French army was in a posture to return to Italy.

The news of the deliverance of Genoa was the last joyful tidings received, before quitting power, by the minister who had dreamed of the independence of Italy. D'Argenson had just obtained a diplomatic victory in another point which he had not less at heart. He had remarried the young Dauphin, quite recently left a widower by the Infanta of Spain, to a daughter of the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland: it was a first step towards his aim to upraise Poland through what had been the instrument

Digitized by Google

of her decline,—the House of Saxony (December, 1746). At the very moment of this success, he was sacrificed to the rancor of the court of Spain, and the intrigues of Noailles and Maurepas (January 7, 1747). The King, during the embassy of Noailles to Spain, had corresponded with the ambassador unknown to the minister. He was beginning to acquire the habit of *conspiring* against his ministers, and keeping up two diplomacies, one secret, the other official; doing himself, an absolute king, through weakness, insincerity, and a puerile spirit of intrigue, what certain constitutional kings do through position. The wise and virtuous D'Argenson was not in his place in the cabinet of Versailles; and there is reason for astonishment, not that he did not remain in public affairs, but that it was possible for him to appear there. The national tradition disappeared with him from the government.[1] We have examined his designs concerning Italy and Poland: his designs as to England, Germany, and Holland, were not less wise, or less national,—to make Europe comprehend that it was not to her interest to submit to the commercial and maritime sway of England, to bring back Holland to the French alliance, to humble Austria through the support of Prussia, and to endeavor to deprive her of Bohemia. With a firm and lucid glance, he had embraced the whole position of Europe. No one in the ministry inherited the broad plans of this man, whom the wits of the court styled *D'Argenson la bête*, because he had only the *necessary* virtues, and was lacking in the accessory virtues, indispensable in such an age,—refined elegance of speech and manners, grace and suppleness of mind, and resignation to waste his time, and to sacrifice a part of himself to this frivolous society. Madame de Pompadour and Noailles replaced him by an insignificant minister, M. de Puisieux.

There are times in which men seem wanting to the destinies of a people; others in which the men manifest themselves, and are paralyzed by the incapacity and unworthiness of the rulers,—a spectacle still more painful, and which is presented in our history in the reign of Louis XV. We have witnessed the fall, at Versailles, of two ministers worthy of conducting the policy of France: we are about to witness the fruitless appearance, on the other side of the world, of heroes capable of giving to their country the empire of the seas and of the East. The maritime and colonial

[1] From the *official* government; for we shall see an effort, worthy of remark, manifest itself in the obscurity of secret diplomacy.

Digitized by Google

affairs, from the epoch that we have reached, present a more powerful and an intenser interest even than the affairs of Europe.

Maurepas and his officials had shown some activity in fitting out vessels, and in taking advantage of the few resources that remained to the kingdom,[1] but without any serious designs, and without any judgment in the choice of men. For instance, the fleet despatched to America, from 1740 to 1741, to protect the Spaniards, had cruelly suffered from the ignorance of a court sailor travestied into a vice-admiral of the West, — the Marquis d'Antin. In 1744, on the contrary, the squadron of the Mediterranean had been intrusted to an experienced officer, — the aged Lieutenant-General de Court. He did his duty admirably at the naval battle of Toulon, and was recalled through deference to the unjust complaints of the Spaniards. The French minister committed mistake after mistake.[2] The English knew how to profit by

[1] They did not exceed thirty-five ships of the line. England, according to Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.*, ch. xxviii., had one hundred and thirty; all of which, indeed, she could not fit out and man at once.

[2] The injustice and fickleness of Maurepas had just caused the failure of the heroic efforts of a Canadian officer, M. de Varenne La Vérendrie, to penetrate Canada inland as far as the great north-west ocean, and to resolve the problem of the junction or the separation of the American and Asiatic continents. La Vérendrie hoped to find, in the vast space that separates the basin of the St. Lawrence from that of the Mississippi, some great river, flowing in an opposite direction from these two rivers, which would lead him to the China seas. Encouraged by the Governor of Canada, Beauharnais, who gave him, in default of a direct subsidy, the privilege of the slave-trade in those unknown regions (1731), he advanced first to Lake Winnipeg, five hundred leagues from our settlements; on reaching which, he claimed direct assistance from the Minister of the Marine. It was refused him (1733-1735). He pursued his courageous enterprise at his own expense with his four sons and his nephew. One of his sons was massacred by the savages; his nephew died: the father and three sons continued to persevere. After attempting different routes with unheard-of efforts, without meeting the great river flowing westward for which the father had hoped, two of the sons, ascending the Upper Missouri, discovered the Rocky Mountains in 1743. They were unable to cross this formidable barrier which separated them from the western ocean; and their father, overburdened with debt, and without assistance or any encouragement from the State, returned to Quebec, and restored his commission to the governor.

The Governor Beauharnais, and his successor La Galissonnière, by dint of remonstrances, finally wrung from Maurepas a partial justice. The La Vérendries again took the field (1748); but the father, worn out, expired at the moment when he was about to resume the direction of the expedition. A new governor of Canada, La Jonquière, despoiled the sons of the inheritance which they had purchased with their sweat and blood, and abandoned the enterprise, with the aim of a covetous traffic, to his favorites, who ruined it. The French did not cross the Rocky Mountains. The Russian expedition of Behring had the honor of resolving the separation of the continents; and the discovery and conquest of Oregon were reserved for the Anglo-Americans. — P. Margry, *Les La Vaqenne de La Vérendrie*, the *Moniteur*, September 14, 15, 1852.

Digitized by Google

them. In 1745, the English colonies of the American continent, the growth of which was constantly becoming more rapid, organized an expedition against Royal Island, or Cape Breton, a colony in which French America was seeking some indemnification for the loss of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Six thousand soldiers and volunteers, setting out from Boston, landed before Louisburg; a place which it had cost thirty millions to fortify since 1720, and which was the outer rampart of Canada, and the point of support of the French sea-fishery. Disorder was prevailing in Louisburg. The administrators of the colony were guilty of malversation, and would not pay the garrison; and the exasperated soldiers refused to serve. The Anglo-Americans, by favor of this confusion, took possession of a large battery which protected the harbor, and which they turned against the town. Louisburg surrendered after fifty days' siege (June, 1745); and the English transported to Brest the garrison and the expatriated inhabitants.[1] The enemy, completely master of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, made preparations to invade Canada, which he hemmed in by land and sea. In the following spring, Maurepas sent a squadron of ten ships, with transports and troops, to defend Canada, and to endeavor to recover Louisburg. He intrusted this to the Duke d'Enville, the Vice-Admiral of the Levant, who had attained the highest rank in the navy without having served anywhere except on the galleys of the Mediterranean. D'Enville threw his squadron to the south of the Azores, where it was retained by a prolonged calm. The scarcity of water and the bad quality of the provisions gave rise to a terrible scurvy, the ravages of which could not be arrested; and it finally reached Canada in a deplorable condition. D'Enville died of the epidemic, with nearly eight thousand sailors and soldiers; and three of the largest vessels were captured by the English on the return. The Governor of Canada, La Galissonnière, succeeded, nevertheless, in repelling the attacks of the English, thanks to the French colonists and the sympathy of the *red-skins*.

The attempts of the English against Martinique and our other West-India Islands were less successful than the Louisburg expedition; and forty privateers fitted out at Saint-Pierre (Martinique) avenged on British commerce the losses that French navigation experienced in the Caribbean Sea and elsewhere.

[1] Voltaire asserts that two of the Indian Company's ships, and a Spanish vessel, that had surrendered themselves by mistake to the English, the masters of Louisburg, carried a freight worth twenty-five millions. — *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. xxviii.

Digitized by Google

Three-fourths of a convoy of forty merchant-vessels which had sailed from Martinique had been taken or destroyed in October, 1745; and two ships of the line that escorted it had succumbed in its defence. The English, in turn, lost in these seas nine hundred and fifty ships and barks, worth thirty millions. Admirable partial battles, sustained with unequal forces, attested that our navy had degenerated only in the leaders inflicted on our squadrons by an insane government.[1]

A more brilliant indemnification was offered us in the East Indies, despite the government and the Indian Company, who seemed to have agreed to destroy every thing. We have already named[2] the two extraordinary men who were then conducting the French interests in the Upper East, — La Bourdonnais and Dupleix. It is necessary to revert here to their origin and their labors before the war. Mahé de La Bourdonnais was born in 1699, in the country of Duguai-Trouin, — that Saint-Malo, so fruitful in heroic mariners, of a family of shipping-merchants,[3] that sent him to the South Sea when only ten years old. Entering the service of the Indian Company in 1719, he signalized himself in 1724 by the decisive share that he took in the conquest of Mahé, — a place which, captured from the natives, secured to the French a position on the coast of Malabar. He then made a large fortune by setting the example of free trade from one East-India port to another. In 1735, he was appointed Governor of the Isles of France and Bourbon, where he effected prodigies. At Bourbon, he had only to develop an agricultural prosperity commenced since the cultivation of coffee had been imported thither from Mocha, and to strive to lessen the inconveniences of the lack of harbors; but at the Isle of France, that great naval position, he created every thing, — agriculture, commerce, warehouses, fortifications, hospitals, dockyards, and roads, as well as laborers, militia, and sailors. The somewhat despotic proceedings by which he had disciplined the colonists, and secured his supremacy over the captains of the ships of the company, which was lax in its government, had raised him up many enemies, whom his rugged and domineering character was not calculated

[1] Sainte-Croix, *Hist. de la puissance navale de l'Angleterre*, t. II. p. 212; L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. ch. vii; Smollett, continuation of Hume, liv. xix.

[2] See *ante*, p. 193.

[3] His family had pretensions to nobility: but he cared little about it. "I have never consulted my family records much," he says in his Memoirs; "and I confess in good faith, that I am absolutely ignorant whether I am of gentle birth or not." — *Mém. de La Bourdonnais*, p. 53; Paris, 1828, 2d edition.

Digitized by Google

to disarm; and the company showed itself far from grateful for his services: it was dissatisfied with his expenditures in fortifying the Isle of France. In a voyage that he made to France in 1740, he succeeded, however, in dispelling these clouds, and in obtaining a hearing from the two ministers that had jurisdiction over him, — Maurepas and Orri. War appearing imminent with England, he proposed to the ministers an ably conceived plan to ruin the English commerce and colonies in India. For this he demanded six ships and two frigates. They were promised him: then the promise was broken, and he was given only three ships and two small frigates belonging to the company. He set out with this little squadron (April, 1741), merely touched at his islands, and went in haste to succor our Indian factories, not against the English (war not yet being declared), but the Mahrattas, — those warlike Hindoo tribes that had shaken off the yoke of the Mogul, ruled the south of the great peninsula, and rendered themselves equally formidable to the Mahometans and the Europeans.

The Mahrattas had appeared before Pondicherry, and demanded that a tribute should be paid them, and that the fugitive family of a Mahometan nabob whom they had conquered and taken should be delivered up to them. The governor, Dumas,[1] to whom our settlements owed notable progress, had proudly refused, and the Mahrattas had hesitated to attack Pondicherry; but the Malabars were besieging Mahé on the other side of the peninsula. La Bourdonnais liberated Mahé (the end of 1741), then returned to his islands to await the signal for war against the English.[2] He received, instead, an order to disarm his vessels, and to send them back to France (1743). September 1, 1744, he learned that war was at last declared in Europe, but at the same time received a new prohibition to attack the English. The Comptroller-General and the Company flattered themselves that neutrality would be maintained in India between the French and English companies; an absurd idea, which the English feigned not to reject, in order to give themselves time to complete their preparations. The Company did not recover from its delusion till it learned that its vessels were everywhere pillaged.

At the moment when the war broke out, it was no longer Du-

[1] He had obtained from the Grand Mogul the right of coining money, refused to other Europeans. The acquisition of Karikal was likewise due to him.

[2] It was during this interval that he discovered and occupied the little archipelago of Seychelles, and took possession of the Island of Rodrigues.

Digitized by Google

mas, but Dupleix, that commanded the French East-India colonies. Joseph François Dupleix, sprung from a family of financiers and administrators,[1] had not been destined, like La Bourdonnais, from birth, to a seafaring life. The escapades of a youth hard to govern, and too impetuous to submit to the monotonous life of an office, had induced his father to place him as ensign, at eighteen, on a ship from Saint-Malo. He definitively quitted France for the East Indies at the beginning of the *System*, "carrying with him the adventurous inspiration of Law."[2] The credit of his father, who had become one of the directors of the company, procured his entrance, as early as 1721, into the superior council of the French East Indies, at Pondicherry. He carried on the inter-Indian trade, or the coasting-trade among the East Indies, simultaneously with La Bourdonnais, perhaps even before him, and ere long on an incomparably larger scale, after he had been called to the direction of the factory of Chandernagore, on the Ganges.[3] Chandernagore, a wretched hamlet, without a single decked vessel, became through him a flourishing town, and a dockyard from which fifteen of the company's vessels were launched: he then made it the great centre of the inter-Indian trade. Seventy-two ships freighted by Dupleix, his friends and relatives, ploughed all the waters of Asia from the Arabian Gulf to the Philippines. Dupleix had supported the French settlement at the mouths of the Ganges by a second factory founded in the heart of Bengal, at Patna, thirty-eight leagues from Benares, the Holy City of the Brahmins. The English commerce in Bengal perished, stifled by this formidable competition. January 1, 1740, Dupleix was appointed governor of Pondicherry, and president of the superior council: October 23, 1742, he became governor-general of the French possessions in India. He began thenceforth to give scope to the ideas that were brooding in his heart. His commercial creations had been only the prelude to greater things: the genius of a Richelieu had ripened in a factory. Dupleix was the first to comprehend the inevitable re-

[1] He was born at Landrecies, at the end of 1696; and was originally from Châtellerault.

[2] Saint-Priest, *Études historiques sur le dix-huitième siècle; la perte de l'Inde sous Louis XV.* This study, brilliantly written, leaves something to be desired as to exactness of details; but the author has been inspired by a laudable idea, — the rehabilitation of a great man unrecognized and calumniated.

[3] A first time sent to Chandernagore, he had been recalled, owing to the enmity of the director of Pondicherry, M. Lenoir (1726). He addressed to the company a memorial on the future of Chandernagore and the plan to be pursued in Indian affairs. This was the first revelation of his genius. The company restored to him the direction of Chandernagore (September, 1730).

Digitized by Google

sult that would proceed from the contact between the stationary communities of the East and the progressive communities of the West, the strength of which increases in proportion to their velocity of motion, by a law wholly analogous to the law of physical gravitation. He saw Asia destined, like America, like the whole world, to submit to the rule of the European races. The recent invasion of Nadir Shah (1738–1739)[1] had manifested the weakness of the Mogul Empire, already revealed by the revolt of the Mahrattas at the south and of the Afghans and Sikhs at the north, and by the insubordination of the governors of the provinces (subahdars and nabobs), who were tending to erect themselves into great irremovable vassals. Dupleix judged India destined to be conquered, not by other Asiatics, like those that had just ravaged it, but by Europeans. Among the Europeans, Portugal had fallen to decay. Holland was declining: there remained France and England. Dupleix resolved to give India to France.

He opened his mind by degrees to the company, in proportion to his progress, and rose himself only by degrees to this great conception. His plan was as prudent in the means as daring in the aim. The most important means was to interfere in the political hierarchy of India through a double character: namely, to remain, on the one hand, the head of a foreign and independent colony; and, on the other, to become the feudatory of the Great Mogul, and to interfere in all the internal affairs of India in order to seize upon or give rise to opportunities for aggrandizement.[2] An auxiliary of brilliant mind and courage lent him the most useful coöperation,—his wife, Jeanne Albert, the daughter of a Parisian

[1] The Shah of Persia had dispersed the immense but confused army of the Grand Mogul; pillaged and laid waste with fire and sword the capital of India, Delhi; carried off the imperial treasure, which was worth more than a billion; and extorted from the Mogul the cession of the provinces on the west of the Indus, with a tribute of seventy millions a year. The revenue of the Mogul Empire amounted to eight hundred millions. — See Barchon de Penhoën, *Hist. de la Fondation de l'empire anglais dans l'Inde*, t. I. p. 332. The English levy there at the present time more than five hundred millions.

[2] The political point of view and the commercial point of view were necessarily confounded here; and it was under this form that Dupleix summed up his idea to the company: "India being a gulf that swallows up the money of Europe, the possession there of lands producing large tributes, and of manufactories on these lands, would give the company, which does not always send money thither regularly and in sufficient quantity, the means of carrying on, without money from Europe, a trade that would become more and more considerable in proportion as these settlements increased. In case of competition, it would have the advantage of procuring merchandise at the lowest price; and, if it had no rivals, its profits would be enormous." — Note of M. P. Margry.

Digitized by Google

physician and a Portuguese Creole by the name of Castro. Familiar with all the Hindostanee dialects, she kept up an extensive diplomatic correspondence, on her husband's account, with all the native personages who could serve the projects of Dupleix; and rendered herself celebrated throughout India under the name of Jàn or Joanna Begum (the Princess Jeanne).

The centre of action imposed on Dupleix by the company was ill chosen in a commercial point of view; Pondicherry having neither a harbor nor markets of importance; and the two great commercial regions of Hindostan being the coast of Malabar and Bengal, and not the coast of Coromandel. In a political point of view, this position, on the contrary, had great advantages. He could hope to rule the Mogul nabobs and the Hindoo rajahs, who shared the south-eastern extremity of the Indian peninsula, through each other, and to create there, under the shelter of the Great Mogul himself, a great territorial establishment, which it would have been premature to attempt at Bengal, too near the centre of the Empire; and which would have been impossible at Malabar, a narrow belt shut in between the sea and the mountains swarming with the warlike Mahratta tribes. To extend the territorial possesssions in Coromandel; to maintain himself in Bengal; to revive the French power in Malabar, whither the ancient company, under Colbert, had formerly directed its efforts, and where French commerce had since been suffered to decline; and to ally his interests with those of the Mahrattas, the most firmly rooted power among the natives, and with those of all the Europeans, the Dutch, Portuguese, and Danes, in order to have his hands free against his sole rivals, the English, — such were the first views of Dupleix.[1]

La Bourdonnais had not such high aims: his whole plan consisted in destroying the English settlements and marine by dint of armed force, and in vigorously developing French commerce; making the Isle of France the entrepôt for this commerce between India and Europe. This opposition between the views of two men equally energetic, but not equally profound, was destined to result in fatal consequences.

They had at first agreed, at least, in judging the maritime neutrality of India impossible. Dupleix negotiated, nevertheless, in obedience to the company, meanwhile completing *at his own expense* the fortifications of Pondicherry, for which funds had been refused him. The English presidencies of India[2] accepted neu-

[1] See Anquetil-du-Perron, *l' Inde en rapport avec l'Europe*, t. II. p. 41.

[2] The English colonies were not centralized like ours: they were divided into four

Digitized by Google

trality for their company, but declared themselves without powers as to the royal navy. This was a snare. The French royal navy had not a ship in Asia: the English admiralty despatched thither a small squadron, that executed the precise project which La Bourdonnais had proposed to the ministers in 1741, and captured all our vessels which it encountered between India and China; then returned to threaten Pondicherry, which the English Governor of Madras was preparing to besiege by land (July, 1745). The garrison was very weak; but the effects of Dupleix's diplomacy were beginning to be visible. The nabob of the Carnatic, the province in which Pondicherry and Madras are situated, declared that he should attack Madras if the English attacked Pondicherry. The English permitted that neutrality to be imposed on them on land which they had rejected on the sea.

La Bourdonnais, meanwhile, was pining with regret and anger in his islands. He did not receive, until the beginning of 1746, the reënforcements from Europe indispensable for action. At last, March 24, he was able to set sail with nine of the company's vessels, which he had succeeded in fitting out for war. A furious tornado drove his squadron, shattered and disabled, into the Bay of Anton Gil (Madagascar). He newly rigged and repaired it on the spot in forty-eight days, by dint of energy and ingenious inventions. July 6, he was in sight of the English squadron on the coast of Coromandel. The English had only six sail against nine; but their ships belonged to the royal navy, and were greatly superior in tonnage, the quality of the crew, and the caliber of the guns. After a warm engagement, the English retired to Ceylon. La Bourdonnais arrived victorious at Pondicherry, and there found himself in the presence of Dupleix. Two opposite systems; two authorities independent of each other, with ill-defined limits; two characters equally proud and absolute, the one hasty and rancorous, the other concentrated, profound, and inflexible,—this was more than was needed to raise up inevitable contention; but it was nothing in comparison with the outside influences. The ministers and the company had done every thing to render conciliation impossible. They had at once conferred on La Bourdonnais powers which seemed to authorize him to take the lead in military operations, and invested Dupleix with a sort of dictatorship, by secretly permitting him to act independently of the control of the superior council of India: they had

presidencies, — Bombay, Madras, the most important, Calcutta, and Banca (the Sunda Islands).

Digitized by Google

at once forbidden La Bourdonnais to keep the factories of the enemy which he might seize, and enjoined on Dupleix to take possession of Madras, if he could render himself master of it, and to cede this English colony to the nabob of the Carnatic. Lastly, La Bourdonnais had been designated by the Comptroller-General as the eventual successor of Dupleix, and the latter knew it. These two men, therefore, whose harmony would have given us Asia, were enemies from the day they met.

After two months wasted in wrangling, reciprocal distrust, and fruitless efforts to overtake the English squadron, La Bourdonnais determined on the siege of Madras. Two thousand soldiers, landed from the squadron, assailed a town of a hundred thousand souls, furnished with two hundred pieces of cannon, but badly fortified through the niggardliness of the English Company, which had not hitherto shown more political foresight than the French Company. The English governor had believed that the nabob of the Carnatic would intervene in the name of the neutrality which he had guaranteed; but the latter, apprised that Madras would be ceded to him, did not stir. The English, few in numbers among a mass of inert Hindoos, were dismayed, and surrendered almost without resistance (September 15–21, 1746). La Bourdonnais exacted that they should become prisoners of war, and that all the personal property, whether of the English Company or of private individuals, should be given up to the French; but he promised that the town should then be restored to the English, and the prisoners liberated, in consideration of a ransom of about nine millions. He thought himself rendering a great service to the company by securing to it a booty of thirteen or fourteen millions, besides the share of the soldiers and sailors, and that which he took for himself. This was not the intention of Dupleix. Having been unable to prevent the capitulation, he attempted to force La Bourdonnais to break it, and signified to him that he had exceeded his powers, and that Madras would not be surrendered to the English. La Bourdonnais replied that he was the master of his conquest, that he had executed his instructions, and that he should keep his word. The quarrel reached such a pass, that the superior council, over which Dupleix presided, sought, it is said, to arrest and carry off La Bourdonnais from Madras, and that La Bourdonnais arrested the officers of the council. They, nevertheless, resumed negotiations; but, while La Bourdonnais was insisting on remaining at Madras until the affair was settled, the semi-annual epoch of the north wind (mon-

Digitized by Google

soon) arrived,—a season, the beginning of which is very dangerous to vessels on this coast, destitute of ports and havens. On the night of October 13–14, a terrible hurricane sunk two of La Bourdonnais' ships, with all on board, and dismasted the rest. It was the shipwreck of his fortune. The unhappy mariner at last resigned himself to the necessity of quitting India at the end of October, and carried back to the Isle of France those of his ships that were seaworthy.

He found a successor already installed in his islands. The company punished him for mistakes that were to be imputed to itself and the ministers much more than to him, — a presage far from reassuring to the rival to whom he seemed sacrificed, and who had no reason to expect greater justice. He determined to return to France in order to justify himself; and sailed for the West Indies, and thence for Europe, in disguise, in a Dutch vessel. The ship put in at England, and La Bourdonnais was recognized, and seized as a prisoner of war. He knew that judicial proceedings were commenced against him at Paris, and obtained permission from the English government to return to France on parole: he had scarcely arrived, when he was thrown into the Bastille (March 6, 1748). The old rancor that was brooding against him in the bureaus of the company had united with the denunciations that came from Pondicherry. He was kept more than two years in close confinement.[1] It was not until the third year of his imprisonment that he was able to obtain a hearing. This was attended with complete success. The charge of treason was found untenable; and that of disobedience fell to the ground before the ministerial instructions which he exhibited. He was acquitted amidst universal applause (1751); but his health was ruined by captivity: his brother and his best friend, involved in his suit, had died in irons; and the company, sustained by ministerial arbitrariness, disputed with him the wrecks of his fortune. He died, undermined by grief, November 10, 1753. All France mourned for him, without knowing the true cause of his misfortunes; and the disfavor that was reflected on Dupleix, presented as a selfish and jealous rival, paved the way for a second and greater victim.[2]

[1] He wrote his Memoirs during this time with verdigris and coffee-grounds, upon white handkerchiefs starched with rice, and dried by the fire.

[2] *Mém. de La Bourdonnais;* Saint-Priest; L. Guérin, t. II. ch. vii.; Barchou de Penhoën, *Hist. de la Fondation de l'empire anglais dans l'Inde,* t. I. liv. iv. This accusation of malevolence and jealousy was so ill founded, that La Bourdonnais, after his acquittal,

Digitized by Google

Dupleix was first to have more than one day of splendor. Immediately after the departure of La Bourdonnais, the nabob of the Carnatic had summoned the French to deliver Madras to him. Such was not Dupleix's intention. The nabob, not obtaining a satisfactory reply, sent his son, with ten thousand men, to besiege the town. A few hundred Frenchmen utterly routed this body of troops. It was the first time that the Europeans had come to an open rupture with the Moguls, till then respected by all the colonists as the masters of India. The moral effect was great. Dupleix pursued his designs. He declared the capitulation of Madras void, expelled the English colonists, invited the merchants and artisans of the different Eastern races that dwelt at Madras to settle at Pondicherry, razed the native town, and increased the fortifications of the English town.[1] He next sought to complete the expulsion of the English from the Carnatic. The nabob came to the aid of the English fort of St. David (or Gondelore), and the Moguls and English, united, succeeded in repelling the attack. Dupleix gained over the nabob anew by negotiations and money; but the return of the English squadron reënforced compelled him the second time to raise the siege of St. David (December, 1746–March, 1747).

The naval inferiority was the principal cause that arrested the progress of Dupleix. The royal French navy did not make its appearance in the East Indies. The year 1747 witnessed the consummation of its ruin in other latitudes, and its numerical weakness finished the work commenced by the incapacity of its court admirals. In the month of May, the Commodore La Jonquière, charged with escorting a rich merchant convoy with five ships of the line, was encountered, off Cape Finisterre (Galicia), by sixteen English ships of the line, commanded by Admiral Anson. He saved the greater part of the merchant-fleet by the obstinacy of his resistance, but was forced to surrender with his men-of-war, and seven of the company's vessels that had taken part in the action. A few weeks after, a merchant-fleet of forty ships, on the

having fitted out a vessel for the East-India trade, Dupleix gave him every facility for the success of his enterprise. "I received it, not as the vessel of *an enemy that is seeking only to destroy me*, but as if it had belonged to my brother." — Letter from Dupleix, transmitted to us by M. P. Margry, from the Dupleix family papers. Unhappily, the accusations of Dupleix were better founded than those of his rival; and La Bourdonnais did immense evil before his death by the prejudices against Dupleix and his projects that he diffused among the bureaus of the ministry and the company.

[1] All the colonial towns of India were divided into the *white* or European, and the *black* or native towns.

Digitized by Google

way from St. Domingo, was taken by the English on this same coast of Galicia. In the course of October, a new battle took place, almost in the same spot, and under the same circumstances, as that of May. The Commodore L'Estenduere, while escorting, with eight ships of the line, two hundred and fifty-two merchant vessels, was attacked by Admiral Hawke at the head of twenty-three ships. L'Estenduere was not braver, but a little less unfortunate, than La Jonquière. He saved his whole convoy, lost six of his men-of-war, and opened for himself a glorious retreat with the last two, thanks to the devotion of a captain, who, unable to gain the offing, had come to join his leader through the enemy's fleet, to save him or perish with him.[1]

The masters of the seas, the English prepared to avenge their insults in India. From 1747 to 1748, they despatched thither forces such as Europe had not yet shown in the Upper East. Admiral Boscawen, perceiving the impossibility of attacking the Isle of France, although bereft of La Bourdonnais, presented himself on the coast of Coromandel in the beginning of August, 1748, with thirty armed vessels, thirteen of which were large ships; and landed there a large body of soldiers and sailors practised in arms. From four to five thousand Europeans, and numerous native bands, roused to insurrection by the English, marched on Pondicherry. Dupleix was in a position to give them a good reception, at the head of fourteen hundred French and two thousand sepoys, or Indians of the warrior caste, organized in the European manner. This was again one of the creations of his genius: he had comprehended what advantage a European conqueror could derive from the bravery and docility of the Kshatriyas, the only warlike element preserved amidst the enervated races. Paradis, the officer who had contributed the most to the capture of Madras, having been mortally wounded at the beginning of the siege, Dupleix directed the defence in person, and received a wound. His wife seconded him admirably: she informed herself of all the movements of the enemies through the numerous native agents that she kept, even in their camp; and braved every danger at his side, cheering officers and soldiers by speeches "worthy of ancient Rome." A shell burst four paces from her. These generous efforts were crowned with success. The attacks on the land side were repulsed with great loss. The bombardment on the side of the sea succeeded no better. The monsoon from the north, so fatal lately to La Bourdonnais, came on, and obliged the enemy's fleet to retreat.

1 Sainte-Croix, t. II. p. 214; Smollett, continuation of Hume, liv. xx.

Digitized by Google

The siege was raised October 18, but too late. Several of the English vessels perished as those of La Bourdonnais had done.

All India resounded with this great repulse of the English. The nabobs of the peninsula, the subahdar (viceroy) of the Deccan, and their suzerain, the Grand Mogul himself, congratulated the conqueror: the ascendency of Dupleix prevailed over him. The successful defender of Pondicherry could labor thenceforth, with as much genius as perseverance, to secure for himself a territorial base which would shelter him, as far as possible, from the chances of maritime war.[1]

We must now return to Europe, and see how that France was directed there, whose honor was so energetically sustained at the other end of the world.

The opportunity had been lost, at the beginning of 1746, of making peace, or at least of withdrawing Holland from the coalition. In the month of September of the same year, conferences were opened at Breda between France, England, and Holland. The burgher patriciate which governed Holland, and which felt itself more and more menaced by the stadtholder faction, in proportion as the French arms approached the United Provinces, sincerely desired peace: Louis XV., and especially his mistress, already very powerful, were strongly inclined to it. It was not so with the English: their envoy was unwilling to enter earnestly into any discussion until the Austrian and Piedmontese ministers had been summoned to the congress. It seemed natural that the English should not negotiate without their ally, Austria: nevertheless, the only means of agreeing on preliminaries would have been to negotiate them without Austria and Spain. This difficulty arrested every thing; and, April 17, 1747, a royal declaration announced that, to arrest or prevent the effects of the protection granted by the States-General to the troops of the Queen of Hungary and the King of England, the King of France found himself obliged to cause his army to enter the territory of the republic, "without breaking with it;" that his troops would preserve the most rigorous discipline; and that the places and provinces occupied would be restored to the United Provinces as soon as they gave proof that they had ceased to succor the enemies of the crown of France.[2]

[1] Notes communicated by M. P. Margry from the Dupleix family papers. — *Mém. de La Bourdonnais*; Saint-Priest; Sainte-Croix, t. II. p. 231; Barchou de Penhoën, t. I. liv. iv.

[2] Flassan, t. V. p. 373.

Digitized by Google

A hundred and twenty thousand soldiers had been placed under the command of Maurice de Saxe. On the same day that the royal declaration appeared, Count Lowendahl, with a large body detached from this army, threw himself upon Dutch Flanders. Sluys, Yzendyke, the Sasse of Ghent, the forts of Philippine, Pearl, and Liefkenshoek, Hulst, Axel, Sandberg, all those fortresses before which the armies of Spain had formerly been shattered, and which had arrested Vauban himself, fell in less than a month. Out of repairs, and insufficiently garrisoned (the greater part of the troops of the republic had been taken by the French in the places of the Austrian Netherlands), they could not be succored by the numerous army of the allies which had assembled in Dutch Brabant, but which was held in check by the Marshal de Saxe.[1] An English squadron alone aided the weak fleet of the United Provinces in preventing the landing of the French in Zealand.

The political reaction of these military successes justified the opposition that had always been made by the Marquis d'Argenson to every plan of an attack on Holland. The old Stadtholder party, supported and instigated by the intrigues and gold of England, renewed the scenes of 1672. The people, carried away by their memories and by the instinct of concentration of power in the presence of invasion, rose in favor of the younger branch of the Nassaus, and forced the municipal corps, then the Provincial States, to proclaim Stadtholder, Admiral, and Captain-General of Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and Overyssel, the Prince of Orange, William IV., the head of the branch of Nassau Dietz, and the son-in-law of George II. He was the hereditary Stadtholder of Friesland, an office that had been in his branch from the time when the eldest branch governed the other provinces; and he had been elected Stadtholder of Groningen and Gelderland several years before, which had commenced the counter revolution (April 23–May 11). A few months after (October 23), the stadtholdership and the two great military posts were declared hereditary even in the female line; the daughters of the Nassaus being empowered to exercise the functions through their husbands, on condition that they married neither kings nor electors. The species of constitutional monarchy founded in favor of the Nassaus, under the name

[1] The military historians point out the good service, in these sieges, of the battalions of grenadiers that had been taken from the militia since 1745. The soldiers due to this species of recruital, however deteriorated it might have been by numerous abuses, speedily became a very valorous infantry. — See D'Espagnac, *Hist. du maréchal de Saxe*, t. II. p. 321.

Digitized by Google

of republic, replaced a first time, in 1650, by the burgher republic, reëstablished in 1672, and abolished anew in 1703, was thus revived, to endure for a lapse of time nearly equal to that of its second abolition. Holland was destined to be long absorbed by England, of which William IV. and his family were no longer any thing but the satellites. There had been this time no John De Witt to massacre: the patricians of the burgher republic were greatly degenerated; but a William III. was still lacking. Every thing was declining in the government of Holland as in that of France; but in Holland it was not only the government, but the nation, that had deteriorated. The municipal aristocracy had not succeeded in doing any thing either to sustain the power which they had reconquered, or to attach the people to political liberty; but the new stadtholders fell far below the burgher government.[1]

The Dutch nation had deluded itself: the accession of a prince devoid of talent and initiative to the direction of the United Provinces brought no new force to the allies. The French kept the offensive, although the allies were at least their equals in numbers, owing to the efforts and the enormous expenditures of England. Louis XV., at the beginning of June, rejoined the Marshal de Saxe, whom he had created marshal-general of the French armies,

[1] The economical causes of the decline of Holland merit some observations. The manufactures of Holland had declined through the increase of the taxes, which had raised the price of provisions, caused the desertion of the workmen, whose wages did not increase in proportion, and, above all, raised the price of merchandise, which could no longer support the foreign competition. The herring-fishery had diminished one-half; and its profits, which had formerly founded the sumptuous Amsterdam, were reduced almost to nothing: it was the same with the whale-fishery. The shipping-merchants fared no better, because they were at the same time merchants of rigging and munitions, and because the interest on money was extremely low. Holland was no longer the universal entrepôt, the intermediate agent, of other nations. The Swedes, the Danes, the Hamburghers most of all, took away from it part of the freight of Europe. The diminution of the profits of commerce by competition, moreover, caused the seller to seek to dispense with an intermediate agent. The duties in the ports of Holland kept away foreign vessels. Holland had ceased to hold the almost entire monopoly of maritime insurance: each nation had its own. The enormous capital accumulated in the United Provinces, no longer finding any use, even at very low interest, had flowed to foreign countries. From the brokers of the world, the Dutch had become the money-lenders: they had sixteen hundred millions invested in England, France, Austria, Saxony, Denmark, and Russia; and, the greatest part of the capital having been directed at first to England, this had not been one of the least reasons of the subjugation of the Dutch by the English; the creditor finding himself at the discretion of the debtor in case of war, as Saint-Simon well observes. In short, private individuals were very wealthy: the State was no longer so. — See Rainal, *Hist. Philosophique des deux Indes*, t. III. p. 310, *et seq.*, quarto edition, 1786. The maritime fortune of England, which dethroned Holland, was thus built up in part with Dutch money.

Digitized by Google

a title borne formerly by Turenne, then by Villars. The master of all the country on the left of the Scheldt, Maurice determined to attack the great stronghold of the Lower Meuse, Maestricht, and marched his army in that direction: the enemies moved between the sources of the Demer and Maestricht. July 2, Maurice assailed them in a position almost similar to that in which he had defeated them the year before near Liege. They occupied a succession of plateaus, from the Meuse and the Jaar to the Demer, and rested on several villages. The key of the position was the village of Lawfeld. Lawfeld was carried after six murderous assaults, and the villages were evacuated; but Maurice did not attain his end, which was to cut off the communications of the enemies with Maestricht. The vigorous charges of the Hanoverian cavalry, which had finally been broken and overpowered, had given the Duke of Cumberland time to effect his retreat with the main body of the army, and to recross the Meuse. It was the repetition of Raucoux. The enemies had lost from nine to ten thousand men, and the French from five to six thousand. The victory was not, therefore, sufficiently complete to render possible the siege of Maestricht. Maurice indemnified himself by sending Lowendahl to besiege Bergen-op-Zoom in his rear. This place, the masterpiece of Cohorn, which commands the eastern mouth of the Scheldt, was reputed impregnable; and its strong garrisons had communications secured by water with a large body that was hastening to its aid. Neither the vigorous resistance of an army unceasingly revictualled, nor the sickness caused among the besiegers by the marshes of the Lower Scheldt, discouraged Lowendahl. He could not hope to reduce the place by famine: he carried it by assault by three breaches which the governor believed impracticable. As before, at the taking of Valenciennes, the French soldiers rushed with impetuosity from work to work to the heart of the city (September 16). Unhappily, the horrors formerly customary in towns taken by storm sullied this brilliant success: the French armies in this war had hitherto left the monopoly of this barbarity to the savage hordes of Austria.

The King set out for Versailles, September 23, after renewing to the States-General his assurances of consenting to a reasonable peace. There was still a minister at the Hague, war not being absolutely declared by the singular signification that had preceded the campaign. Maurice de Saxe had, on his side, intrusted to General Ligonier,[1] taken at Lawfeld, at the head of the English

[1] The son of a French refugee.

Digitized by Google

cavalry, and sent back on parole, a memorial from the Minister Puisieux, offering to surrender all the conquests of the King, with the reservation of Furnes to cover our frontier, left open by the dismantling of Dunkirk. Louis XV. had sufficient glory. It was agreed to open a congress at Aix-la-Chapelle.

The war had been waged fiercely in Liguria and the Alps during this campaign. Maria Theresa breathed nought but vengeance against the Genoese; and England gave the Austro-Piedmontese £300,000 for the siege of Genoa. Two months after the evacuation of Provence, an Austrian army corps again forced the passage of the Apennines; and the courageous city was besieged by land and sea (April, 1747). A brave and able general, the son of the Marshal de Boufflers, six thousand French soldiers, and a subsidy of two hundred and fifty thousand francs a month, insured the duration of the defence. Spain had sent a few soldiers, a few munitions, and many promises. The government of Ferdinand VI., destitute of money, and without any other resource than twenty thousand men that it could no longer recruit, had ordered its general to spare his troops to such a point, that, to use the expression of the French, the Spanish army "was of no more use than if it had been made of pasteboard." Despite the little assistance that he derived from the Spaniards, the Marshal de Belle-Isle retook the county of Nice from the Piedmontese (June 5). The Franco-Spaniards threatened to return to Piedmont. The King of Sardinia recalled his troops from Liguria, and urged his allies to aid him in protecting his States. The siege of Genoa was raised. France had repaid Genoa for the service that she had received; and Boufflers had not only defended Genoa, but had pacified it by interposing himself between the populace exalted by their triumph, and the higher classes, too great strangers to the deliverance of their country. It was not, like degenerate Holland, by the sacrifice of their liberty that the noble people of Genoa thought to save their independence from foreign powers. Boufflers, at which we cannot be astonished, inclined somewhat more than was reasonable to the side of the aristocracy.

Genoa saved, the point in question was to resume the offensive against Piedmont. The Spanish general, Las Minas, wished the attack to be made by the way of Liguria; Belle-Isle, by that of Dauphiny. After much wrangling, it was decided to make the descent by the way of Upper Dauphiny. While Las Minas harassed the enemy by the road to Corniche (Liguria), and the Marshal de Belle-Isle menaced the passes of the Stura, the Chevalier

Digitized by Google

de Belle-Isle, the brother of the Marshal, set out from Briançon with a third corps, and entered the inaccessible mountains that separate the valley of the Little Dora from that of the Chiusone. He wished to pass between the fortresses of Exilles and Fenestrelle, and to debouch by the wildest gorges of the Alps in the valley of the Sangoni, which leads to Turin. He was arrested at the Col de l'Assiette by an intrenchment of dry stone and wood, defended by a Piedmontese corps. Unable either to turn or to command the position, he attacked it in front with blind impetuosity: for two hours, the French endured a shower of grape-shot and bullets muzzle to muzzle with the enemy's muskets, without succeeding in overcoming an obstacle that heavy artillery alone could have overthrown. The Chevalier de Belle-Isle, in despair, met his death while planting a flag on the Piedmontese intrenchments. More than five thousand French, dead or wounded, strewed this fatal defile (July 19). The Chevalier de Belle-Isle had shared equally in all the projects and visions of his brother, and had contributed as much as he to this war in which he was to perish.

This unfortunate attempt to cross the Alps was not renewed: but the Duke de Richelieu was sent to Genoa with reënforcements that increased the French auxiliary corps to at least fifteen thousand men (the end of September); and the Franco-Genoese reappeared at the north of the Apennines, in the rear of the Austro-Piedmontese army.

Negotiations were entered upon during the winter, but with little sincerity on the part of the allies, who, full of contempt for the moderation or weakness of Louis XV., judged that he would still be too happy to restore his conquests, should they be reduced to the necessity of accepting them from his hand. The savage obstinacy that Maria Theresa took for magnanimity, and the hatred of George II. for France, fettered every thing. The hope of important aid rendered them still more obdurate. Russia determined to intervene; and the King of England obtained from the Czarina Elizabeth the promise to hold thirty-seven thousand foot at his disposal, in consideration of a trifling subsidy of £100,000 (June–November, 1747–February, 1748). As early as the month of February, the Austrians recommenced attacks on the Genoese territory, which were warmly repulsed by Richelieu.

"Sire," Maurice de Saxe had said to Louis XV., "peace is in Maestricht." This great stronghold of the Dutch would, in falling, deliver up the Lower Meuse and the entrance to the United

Digitized by Google

Provinces on the side where England could not succor them. The military administration, and the organization of the intendants, had again become excellent under the ministry of the Count d'Argenson, chiefly through the impulse of that aged Pâris Duvernei whom we have seen prime minister in fact under the ministry of *Monsieur le Duc*, and who had resumed a certain influence in the practical management of public affairs. Vast preparations were completed in good time; and, April 13, two armies that had marched along both banks of the Meuse, feigning to menace Breda, invested Maestricht, without the allies being able to oppose them.

This news produced a lively impression upon the congress assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle. The public funds had been falling greatly for some time in England; agitation was beginning to prevail in this country, which alone kept up the war; and the pompous spectacle of all those wagons, laden with gold, silver, and costly articles, that from time to time conveyed through London the prizes taken from the commerce of France and Spain, was ceasing to make the public forget the weight of the taxes, which amounted to at least £9,000,000 for the year. The ministers who had replaced the fiery Carteret, the brothers Pelham, were less warlike than the King, and had induced him to give to the English plenipotentiary instructions that rendered peace possible in certain contingencies. The plenipotentiary, Lord Sandwich, judged that the contingency had come; and, in concert with the Dutch ambassador, transmitted to the Count de Saint-Séverin, the plenipotentiary of France, a plan that appeared acceptable (April 26). The preliminaries of peace were signed, April 30, between France, England, and Holland, without waiting for the signature of the envoys of Austria and Spain: it was the only means of arriving at a result. The principal conditions were the restitution of the respective conquests; the cession of the Duchy of Parma by Maria Theresa to the Infant, Don Philip; the maintenance to the kings of Prussia and Sardinia of what had been ceded to them by Austria; the renewal of the assent given to the Pragmatic Sanction with respect to all the rest of the inheritance of Charles VI.; the restitution to England of the negro-slave trade (*assiento*), and of the *privileged vessel* to the Spanish colonies for four years; the recognition of the Emperor Francis I. by France and Spain; the preservation of the fortifications rebuilt at Dunkirk during the present war on the land side, but the restoration of the place to the footing of the treaty of Utrecht on

Digitized by Google

the side of the sea;[1] lastly, the cessation of hostilities within six weeks. It was agreed, apart from the treaty, that, for the honor of the French arms, Maestricht should be surrendered to the Marshal de Saxe, to be restored with the other conquests. A *secret* clause, which it was taken care to suffer to transpire, threatened the power that did not assent with the loss of the advantages procured for it by the preliminaries.[2]

The Austrian plenipotentiary, Count von Kaunitz, who was beginning a long and celebrated political career, protested, then assented, May 25; the ambassador from Spain did not follow this example till June 28: the petty States involved in the quarrel had already signed or were signing. Louis XV., in a letter addressed to the King of Spain, May 5, had, in some sort, apologized for having imposed peace upon him, alleging the ruin of the commerce and marine of the two crowns, the constantly increasing forces that the allies precipitated against France, and the exhaustion of France and Spain. These motives were only too real. The wretchedness and depopulation of our most fertile provinces were frightful; the Comptroller-General knew no longer where to find money; the intendants had notified the war-office that it was impossible for them to raise a new militia; the intendant of Guienne wrote that his province was on the eve of perishing of famine.[3] The imminent danger of Canada and of Pondicherry, the glorious resistance of which was not foreseen, was another important consideration.

August 2, an agreement was made to send back the thirty-seven thousand Russian auxiliaries, who had advanced as far as Franconia. The definitive treaty was not signed until October 18, — almost on the very day that the English were defeated before Pondicherry. It was a bitter sorrow to the Governor of the French East Indies to restore that conquest of Madras by which he had hoped to secure the fall of the English colonies. The unfortunate La Bourdonnais had rightly foreseen this restitution. It was possible only at this price to recover Louisburg, and perhaps to save

[1] The Dunkirk privateers, formerly so much dreaded by the English, had reappeared with success during this war.

[2] Wenck, t. II. p. 310.

[3] Letter of the King, and Memorial of M. de Saint-Séverin, ap. Flassan, t. V. pp. 406–427. As to Spain, the secret of its obstinacy was in the very excess of its distress. "Being unable to fall lower in point of destitution and suffering," to use the very words of one of her diplomatic agents, she considered herself as having nothing to lose, since she had not to fear territorial invasion. — See Coxe, *Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. IV. p. 10.

Digitized by Google

Canada; but the treaty was very badly framed so far as the latter country was concerned. The respective limits of Nova Scotia and Canada, disputed between the French and English colonists, were not fixed; and the decision was left to commissioners. This was leaving the door open for a new war, as soon as the English, always on the alert in the presence of a somnolent and careless adversary, should think it to their interest to resume hostilities. In short, the changes effected on the surface of Europe and the world by this immense war were very trifling in proportion to the rivers of blood spilt and the oceans of treasure expended. An enormous increase of the public debt in France and England[1] was at least somewhat compensated for, among the English, by the maritime preponderance conquered: as to us, after having conquered all Belgium and a part of Holland, we had not even gained the right to be masters at home, and to reopen the harbor of Dunkirk. Austria, which had been near annihilation, lost nothing but Silesia, Parma, and a part of Milanais, and had learned to know the resources of the warlike population of the Lower Danube. The military importance of the irregular bands of Hungary and Slavonia, the far greater importance, the military superiority, insured to Prussia by her new system of tactics, the maritime superiority secured to England by numbers and by a good naval administration, the profound decline of Holland, the impossibility of defending Belgium, and perhaps even Holland, against France, — such were the principal results acquired in contemporaneous politics. A last result, the worst for our country, was that there was no longer either diplomacy or government in France, — no longer even the bad diplomacy of Dubois, which, at least, had an aim.

[1] England had increased her debt two billion francs; France, twelve hundred millions.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

THE PHILOSOPHERS.

SECTION I. — Society. Men of Letters. The Fine Arts. The Family. Moral Condition. The Great Nobles and the Church. Massillon. Prophecy of Leibnitz. SECTION II. — Criticism. Erudition. Historical Systems. Moral and Political Sciences. Fréret. Boulainvilliers. Dubos. *The Club of the Entresol.* The Abbé de Saint-Pierre. D'Argenson. *Considerations on the Government of France.* Philosophy and Letters. VOLTAIRE. His Plays. Montesquieu. Persian Letters. *The Henriade.* Voltaire in England. He brings back to France Sensualism and Newtonianism. His Inconsistent Deism. His Tolerance. His Historical Works. Scientific Voyages. La Condamine, Maupertuis, etc. THE EARTH MEASURED. Bordeu. *Vitalism. Freemasonry.* Vauvenargues. *Spirit of Laws.*

1715–1750.

SECTION I. — SOCIETY. MORAL CONDITION.

IN following the course of events in the period that elapsed between the death of Louis XIV. and the peace of 1748, we have already met many revelations concerning the moral and intellectual condition of that society which had experienced so profound a transformation in half a century. This constitutes the great interest for us during the rest of this history. The government and all the institutions, all the official beliefs, continuing more and more to deteriorate and become decomposed, it is above all important to penetrate, through the external accidents, to the inmost and the most general signs of this decomposition, and to discern among the symptoms of death the germs of a new life. Between the roots of the old social tree that was withering, the eighteenth century was sowing good wheat and tares confusedly, and often by the same hand, which the nineteenth century, itself so confused and obscure, has not yet known how to separate. It is the duty of the historian to point out, in proportion to their manifestation in the national life, the principles, some salutary, others fatal, which have made us what we are. The task undertaken in this book stops at the day when these principles, transferred from the

Digitized by Google

sphere of ideas into that of facts, overthrew ancient society and inaugurated the new world.

We have attempted elsewhere to analyze the principal elements of the genius of France:[1] we have seemed to see France, from the Gauls to our days, vibrating between sentiment and the critical spirit as between two poles. From this arises, so to speak, the great *contradictoriness* of the national character. We mean, by the critical spirit, the negative principle contained in common sense or practical reason; that essentially French faculty, which, according as it proceeds by affirmation or negation, is the sagacious auxiliary or the dangerous adversary, and at times the useful curb, of sentiment. Sentiment, in our history, gave birth to the crusades, to the religious art of the Middle Ages, to amorous and chivalrous poetry, and also to the mysterious popular inspirations of the *religion of the Holy Spirit;* then saved us by the incarnation of the genius of France in Jeanne Darc. The critical spirit, which had its origin in certain parts of the literature of the Middle Ages, ascended the throne with the ironical Louis XI.; blended with the opposite principle, sentiment, both in the Christian Reformation and in the naturalistic Renaissance of the sixteenth century; and, finally, broke forth with the scepticism of Montaigne. In the seventeenth century, there was manifested among us a sublime apparition, an unknown goddess, pure reason, whose reign makes this age an age unique in history. This reign, nevertheless, did not emerge from the sphere of the mind; and, again, it abstained from invading two vast domains of this sphere, — the domain of religious ideas and that of political ideas. Spinoza alone penetrated therein, among all the philosophers of pure reason; but contemplative and solitary Pantheism was not of a nature to attract France, the country of action and collective life. The philosophy of pure reason remained incomplete, and unable to descend into the sphere of reality and practical reason. No one among the French people, among the people of sentiment, was inspired to complete reason by sentiment; and the movement of Leibnitz ended in nothing among us, any more than that of Spinoza, — an alarming faltering of the genius of France, which became troubled, and paused, instead of continuing its work.

The world, however, could not pause: it was necessary to advance, it was necessary to shake off the bonds of the past, it was

[1] *De la France, de son génie et de ses destinées;* 1847.

Digitized by Google

necessary for philosophy to descend from its peaceful abstractions into the arena of real life. France was trembling under the yoke of the old institutions and old traditions, and seeking weapons everywhere. If pure reason did not furnish them, she would demand them elsewhere. Already the critical spirit had sounded the charge with the great sceptic Bayle. This was not enough: a doctrine was needed. Sensualism had one in a foreign country: in England, a metaphysical doctrine blended accidentally with a doctrine of political reform. France would go to England in search of sensualism, as, in the sixteenth century, she had gone to Germany in search of Protestanism, but this time with a greater and more profound success.

This was because society was ready prepared for it, and because there were no longer great resisting forces in reserve, as against the Protestant Reformation. Practical sensualism had preceded philosophical sensualism. Spiritualism had been shaken in point of fact by the licentious reaction that had broken forth against the devotion and rigidity of Louis XIV. Cartesianism, Jansenism, and Jesuitism, — these three rivals, among whom the seventeenth century had been divided, were threatened simultaneously. Severe metaphysical dogmatism, the asceticism of sincere devotion, and the hypocrisy of political devotion, were equally antipathetic to the new generation, which would keep the method of Descartes, as an instrument of criticism and analysis, while divesting it of the crown of its first virtues, and depriving it of the principle which made it royal, in order to make it the servant of sensualism.

Let us now descend from these heights, more closely to survey this society over which we have just hovered with rapid flight, and glance at ideas and manners, and at the literature and arts which reflected and reacted upon them.

After the mad intoxication of the Regency, the disorder had become calmed and regulated, so to speak. Orgie-like license had passed away like hypocritical strictness; society had become settled in its new manners, — new by the frankness with which it avowed what remained partially veiled in obscurity in the time of the Great King. Refined voluptuousness gained the ground lost by gross debauchery. Instead of the delirium of the senses, an elegant and polished, subtle and reasoning sensualism reigned. A keen, sprightly, and volatile wit replaced the wit of mad sallies, the wit of the Regency. Life became more and more external; the need of multiplying relations, the interchange of ideas, impressions, and sensations, ruled every thing; and the sociability which has always

Digitized by Google

signalized the French character extended beyond all bounds. Never had society been so brilliant, so full of grace and attraction. Conversation was sparkling: less copious and less serious than in the last century, it was no longer instructive, but it was charming, dazzling, and fascinating. The admiration expressed in his familiar letters by a foreigner, the most witty man in England, Chesterfield, shows how far French society of this time had the superiority over the rest of Europe in manners, language, taste, and distinction of every kind. French education was finished in these respects; but every thing therein was sacrificed to the art of pleasing, and nothing to that of deserving. Sagacity and accuracy, therefore, were oftenest on the surface, and frivolity at the bottom. The so much vaunted taste was over-refined and deteriorated by subtlety, and by the necessity of amusing at any price if one wished to please. Thence arose the deplorable fashion of *persiflage*. To amuse being the highest aim, and malignity being more piquant than kindliness, ill-nature was reduced to an art, and the *méchant* became a type. Ill-nature, moreover, was superficial like all else, and was little more, in general, than malice and selfish frivolity. This selfishness, which avowed, without circumlocution, its contempt for private ties,[1] the family, and friendship, was oftenest associated, by strange contrast, with a display of philanthropy towards mankind in general, which was not devoid of sincerity. The reason of this was, that selfishness and humanity sometimes proceeded here from the same cause, — the mobility and multiplicity of the relations which brought men in contact with every thing and every one, and which prevented the birth of strong private affections, or stifled them, at the same time that it disposed men to a certain collective benevolence. Among a people as sympathetic as ours, the principle of affection could not but find its place somewhere.

In short, the excessive growth of sociability had been effected at the expense of the family spirit, and of solid and necessary relations: life had lost in depth what it had gained in surface. The moral sense had become greatly weakened in the higher and lettered classes. That haughty reservation of personal dignity, styled

[1] I am weary of kindred; these ties, these chains,
Of men whose faults or sorrows we share:
All these are prejudices, annoyances of old times;
Kindred, in short, is for the people.
. . . . . each one for himself.
GRESSET, *Le Méchant*.

Digitized by Google

honor, took the place of virtue and duty among men; and honor itself suffered numberless eclipses: all strength became deteriorated in this enervating atmosphere.[1]

The different classes of *polite* society were modified by each other, and mixed together much more than they had hitherto done. The men of letters were the most active agents in this blending. They had been for a moment involved in politics under the Regency. The Regent, the Duchess du Maine, and, above all, Dubois, had employed them in clothing base deeds in fine words.[2] The government, under Fleuri, seeking nothing but silence, had not continued to make use of men who sought noise and renown above all else: it had not, moreover, felt strong enough to retain them long in the state of passive instruments. The men of letters, forsaken by the government, were seized upon by society, which was in pursuit of all kinds of pleasures (those of the intellect like the rest),—of every thing that gave motion and variety to life. As soon as it had relished *the wits*, it could no longer dispense with them: it adopted and enthroned them, on condition of being recompensed by their presence and conversation, even more than their pen. Under Louis XIV., the authors *came* to the court, which was the *world* of that time: they did not *live* there, but generally led a life of study and retirement. Now the *world* surrounded and monopolized them: they lost thereby in knowledge of books and in reflection, and gained in practical knowledge of men and of life. The barriers were broken down, and the opposition became less strongly marked between the nobility of the sword, the law, finance, and literature. The financier prided himself on belles-lettres, aspired to good taste, and went sometimes as far as lofty sentiments:[3] La Popelinière was no longer

[1] "Those who might pretend to the honor of setting an example by their rank or enlightenment appear to have too little respect for principles. The lower classes, having no principle, for want of education, . . . have nothing but imitation for a guide. It is in the middle class that probity is still most in honor." — Duclos, *Considérations sur les Mœurs de ce siècle;* 1751, p. 101.

It is a citizen that eulogizes the *middle class:* nevertheless, this saying on the want of popular education is not lightly uttered. Duclos has an excellent chapter on education.

[2] Fontenelle, Destouches, l'Abbé Dubos, etc.

[3] In 1744, the Comptroller-General Orri having projected the abolition of the duties on the exportation of many kinds of French merchandise, the farmers-general, to whom these duties reverted, offered of themselves to surrender them a year before the expiration of their lease, for the good of commerce. — See Bailli, t. II. p. 123. The salutary influence of the merchants, dating from the epoch of Law, had effected a transformation in the coarse and ignorant revenue-farmers of former times.

Digitized by Google

Turcaret. The duke and peer found it piquant to be the friend of a poet. "Wit renders all conditions equal," says Duclos; an *equality* which did not prevent the duke and peer from causing himself to be styled *Monseigneur* by his friend;[1] the ostentation of titles continuing to increase in proportion as real authority and the distinction of rank diminished. It is to be regretted that this kind of equality should have oftenest been that of brilliant vice, and that, while some stooped, the rest did not rise.

The moral supremacy having returned from Versailles to Paris, it is in the principal gathering-places of this capital, the drawing-rooms, the coffee-houses, and the theatres, that the movement of minds is to be studied. The public opinion was formed, and the tone was given, at the houses of the women who made themselves the centres of literary societies, — of Madame de Lambert, Madame de Tencin, Madame du Deffant, and Madame Geoffrin; names strangely coupled. It is a characteristic indication of the laxness and confusion of every thing to be obliged to cite the estimable Madame Lambert[2] by the side of the intriguer and prostitute, Tencin, the unworthy successor of that Ninon, who, at least, had the right to boast of being an *honest man*. The most illustrious writers did not scruple to become intimate with this woman, who adorned her vices with all the graces of the mind. As to the malignant Du Deffant, the former friend of Madame de Prie, and the charming Geoffrin, their drawing-rooms were destined singularly to increase in importance, and to become the centres not only of wit, but of ideas.

The coffee-houses, an innovation introduced from the East under Louis XIV., almost rivalled the drawing-rooms in influence. Of all the importations of this kind that had modified the European regimen since the sixteenth century, the Arabian liquor, which clears and animates the mind instead of confusing it, had been found best suited to the French taste and temperament. As early

[1] See Voltaire's letters to the Duke de Richelieu. Formerly, the term *Monseigneur* was only applied by vassals to their lords, or to the King as the common lord: the princes of the blood themselves were only entitled *Monsieur*. The bishops did not arrogate to themselves until the age of Louis XIV. this title of *Monseigneur*, so contrary to Christian modesty.

[2] Author of moral works as commendable in substance as distinguished in style, — *Avis d'une mère à son fils; Avis d'une mère à sa fille; Traité de l'amitié*, etc. *Her Réflexions sur les femmes*, especially, is a masterpiece of delicacy and moral elevation, to which we shall revert. She should have been the mother of Vauvenargues! She died, at a very advanced age, in 1733.

Digitized by Google

as the Regency, the coffee-houses disputed the ground with the *cabarets*, so dear to that vinous epoch: there were three hundred of them in Paris. Since that time, they had acquired a decided preponderance, at least in the higher and middle classes; the excess of wine tending to become the fault of the wholly uncultured classes alone. The use of coffee may be numbered among the causes of the profound modification which began to be wrought in the physical organization of the wealthy and lettered classes: the excessive development of the nervous system, which announced itself among women by the frequency of *vapors*, and among men by muscular enervation, proceeded chiefly, however, from moral causes, — from the feverish excitement of the restless indolence in which they lived, and the absence of consistency and serious aim; of any tonic, so to speak, in education and habits.

It was oftenest on quitting the theatre that those encounters between the wits, with weapons keen but not always courteous, which were one day to be celebrated in memoirs and collections of anecdotes, took place in the coffee-houses. The theatre had assumed an importance in social life, which must not be judged by the value of the contemporaneous dramatic works. While many more or less successful novelties were produced, the past, the creations of Louis XIV., were better appreciated, both in France and throughout Europe, than at the time of their appearance: posterity alone can make the definitive classification of masterpieces. The manner of rendering these masterpieces, however, endured a transformation dictated by the spirit of the epoch. The poetic ideal vanishing, while the sentiment of real life became more active and more intense, the melopœia, less strongly accentuated than among the ancients, but still sufficiently marked to impose a sort of lyrical conventionality upon tragedy, was abolished by celebrated actors (Baron in his last years, and Mademoiselle Lecouvreur), who spoke the verses thenceforth, instead of *chanting* them. This substitution of the natural tone for the lyrical tone coincided with the increase of private and college theatricals, which diffused everywhere the talent for declamation, ease, grace, and confidence of manner;[1] while numerous literary societies propagated the taste for French

[1] "To narrate, recite, and declaim well, are serious studies with the French: they never express themselves in a vulgar manner." — Letters of Lord Chesterfield, cxcvii., ccxi., ccxxxvi. The Jesuits, whom Chesterfield warmly admires as great masters *in the art of pleasing*, had been the promoters of the college-theatres: they had gone so far as to introduce opera-dancers for the ballets.

Digitized by Google

literature from Paris to the provinces, and from the provinces to foreign countries, invaded by it on all sides.

The times seemed better adapted to comedy than to tragedy: two names of comic authors were destined to survive the Regency and the first years of Fleuri, — Destouches and Marivaux. The first, coldly reasonable, and oftenest diffuse without spirit or humor, would have left few traces, had he not once in his life attained to high character comedy. The *Glorieux* (1732) belongs to history: it is the sequel of the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Turcaret*, the famous alliance of the nobility and the financiers represented on the stage. Marivaux, a much more original writer, was the pupil of Fontenelle, and of that little court of Sceaux, the school of affectation and far-fetched wit, and the degenerate relic of the seventeenth century, which was, as it were, a miniature of Versailles, or rather an insipid and corrupt revival of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. But the delicacy and grace of Marivaux's wit pierced through the false taste with which he was surrounded. He excelled in depicting the surprises of the heart, or rather of the imagination, so common in this mobile and fantastic society. If he was ignorant of the beaten track of the heart, he knew its by-paths, as Voltaire says; and the charm which his contemporaries found in his piquant plots was not to disappear entirely with the society from which he took his models.[1]

A little later, one of those vivid creations, in which the author is confounded with his work, again rescued a name from forgetfulness. Piron, the witty author of a host of mediocre productions, embalmed in the *Métromanie* (1738) the type of the *rhymer*, — of the man who writes for the sake of writing, as the bird sings, at the moment when this type was about to be effaced before that of the man who writes for the sake of teaching and of fighting, and who uses his pen as a sword. The last comedy of this generation that deserves the remembrance of history was the *Méchant* (1747), in which Gresset depicted, with a remarkable talent for observation, a social caprice of which we have just spoken.

Although the epoch appeared far from tragic, a celebrity was being reared in tragedy, far more brilliant than the comic authors; but it is not yet time to approach the great figure whom we shall soon see ruling over all the paths of renown.

When manners are observed through literature, it becomes necessary to complete the study of the drama by that of the novel,

[1] *Les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard* was written in 1730.

Digitized by Google

which is able to elaborate what the stage only outlines in bold strokes, to free itself from the conventionalities and proprieties imposed on the dramatic poem, and to dare every thing in a word. The novel assumed a character of hackneyed gallantry which was nothing but cold libertinism. It suffices to cite the younger Crébillon, so unlike his father, the gloomy tragic writer. There were, nevertheless, striking exceptions: the Abbé Prévost, a writer of profound, ingenuous, and impassioned feeling, owed the success of his extensive and numerous works precisely to the contrast which he presented to the general physiognomy of his time. Truth and simplicity were a piquant novelty to this generation, satiated with the refinements of the mind and the senses. The huge novels of Prévost were destined one day to be buried in the recesses of libraries, like so many estimable creations untouched by the fire of genius; but this fire rested for a moment on the head of the unhappy abbé, and inspired a little masterpiece, — *Manon Lescaut* (1732). Something still more astonishing was a little novel, which equalled in sensibility and surpassed in painful energy the author of the *Princesse de Clèves*. The *Comte de Comminges* was written by a woman; and this woman was Tencin, the incestuous sister, the unnatural mother, the accomplice and pander of all the vicious men of power; the woman not only led astray by passion, but degraded by the most shameful calculation. Strange mysteries of the human soul! Can the ideal, then, reflect its light to the bottom of such degradation? or is the tradition to be admitted which takes away this work from Tencin to give it to M. d'Argental?[1]

The fine arts offer as many revelations as letters concerning the spirit of the age, and should have their share in the review that we are pursuing. For instance, the modification in the austerity of religious worship by the introduction of stringed instruments, profane airs, and male and female theatrical singers, into church music, is significant. The taste for singing was very widely diffused in the first third of the eighteenth century; and the clavecin and bass-viol had taken the place of the lute and theorbo as fashionable instruments. The school of Lulli, which was only the ancient French music modified with taste and judgment by a Gallicized Italian, reigned with Lulli's successors, Colaud, Mouret, Destouches, and Campra. The science of harmony was a cipher in France; but melody, so tender, so naïve, and so

[1] Marivaux also wrote novels of a powerful and serious cast, in which neither the affectation nor the gallant subtlety of his plays is found.

Digitized by Google

touching, in our old masters, preserved the expressive and dramatic qualities which are the French characteristics. A learned and powerful artist, Rameau, gave in 1722, in his *Treatise on Harmony*, the signal for a revolution which he accomplished by his works fifteen years later. He introduced the Italian science into France, and, without wholly breaking with the national tradition,[1] freed music from the obligation of expressing determined sentiments in all its modulations, and of following the poetry step by step.

The plastic arts bore a much more apparent relation than music to the manners of this epoch. For instance, architecture no longer erected great monuments; but it made an entire revolution in the interior of dwellings, multiplied the pieces of furniture while diminishing their size, abolished the immense windows and the huge mantles loaded with sculpture, lavished mirrors, and everywhere substituted grace and convenience for grandeur. Voluptuousness had dethroned pride: the monuments of the times are those *petites maisons*, where the nobles and the men of wealth sheltered their pleasures in the gardens of the suburbs of Paris.[2] After the lapse of a century, there may still be perceived here and there, hidden among the islets of tall houses inhabited by the population of the new quarters or half concealed by the remains of a bower of trees, a few of these little temples to the modern Venus, with the festoons of stone and the lascivious masks of nymphs and satyrs that adorned their frontons and friezes, — the last vestiges of an era of epicurean carelessness, forgotten in the midst of this new world, so stormy and so sombre.[3]

In architecture, painting, sculpture, ornaments, decorations, furniture, everywhere ruled fantasy, forms capriciously contorted, coquettish and frivolous graces. The beauty of lines and types had long since been lost. The art of grand composition

[1] See, in the Memoirs of the Marquis d'Argenson (p. 410), the vehement defence of the old French music against the Italian music, which was nothing but a capricious medley in the eyes of the champions of the old school. — See also Lémontei, *Hist. de la Régence*, t. II. p. 366; Voltaire, *Le Temple du Goût*, in which observations are to be found of rare justness.

The only really important monument of this period at Paris is the Church of Saint-Sulpice, an edifice imposing through its proportions, and especially through its portico, but the different parts of which are lacking in taste and beauty. The Bourbon Palace was the first structure in which a new arrangement of the parts in conformity with a plan was established. It was constructed about 1722 by the Duchess de Bourbon, the mother of *Monsieur le Duc*.

[2] The first *petites maisons* were built towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV. by the Marshal d'Huxelles and the Duke de Noailles. — Lémontei, t. II. p. 515.

Digitized by Google

disappeared in turn from painting with François Lemoine (deceased in 1737), the painter of the ceiling of the *Hall of Hercules* at Versailles. Lemoine had indeed succeeded in planning an immense work, but not in executing it. Tame, incorrect, affected, and devoid of elevation, he consummated the decline of grand painting. Sculpture, on its side, elegant and spirited, but affected, with Coustou, had departed with Lepautre (deceased at a very advanced age in 1744) from the conditions suited to it, and had assumed a theatrical, complicated, and confused character: it no longer knew how to evolve with bold simplicity the essential lines of a group, but tortured itself with expressing minute details which should be neglected by the chisel.[1] Bouchardon, the successor of Lepautre,[2] with a less overwrought style, had neither strength nor purity enough to revive the art. Pigalle was destined to succeed no better. In second-rate statuary, there remained, as in painting, manual skill, subtlety, and vivacity. Spirit, the essential quality of the times, was found again in the arts. While the school of Lebrun degenerated and became extinct with the Coypels, the De Troyes, and the Lemoines, there appeared a species of refined and coquettish Flemish Renaissance, adapted to the *boudoirs* of the eighteenth century. Drawing lost, color at least returned to allure the eye of a sensual epoch. The Regency had a charming painter, who wore, in a nature and society purely conventional, a species of perpetual masquerade, a brilliancy so sparkling that it resembled truth, and a coloring as marvellous as that of the old Flemish masters. Watteau shone for a little time with his *shepherdesses* of the Opera and the *Comédie Italienne*. Other Italianized Flemings, the Vanloos, held for a considerable time the sceptre of painting. Karl Vanloo, so brilliant, so facile, and so lax, remains the type of this school; but fancy painting declined in its turn, like grand painting: the spirit that animated the fancies of Watteau and Vanloo disappeared in Boucher, the favorite painter of Louis XV.; and left nothing subsisting but insipid tameness and vulgar license, like the dregs of evaporated liquor. Boucher was worthy to be the Raphael of the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*. All sentiment of the beautiful and the ideal was so far lost, that men associated these two names, Raphael and Boucher, without thinking it blasphemy, and as if the one was the legitimate successor of the other.[3]

[1] See, in the Garden of the Tuileries, Pœtus and Aria, and Eneas and Anchises.

[2] Statues in the Church Saint-Sulpice; Fountain of the Rue de Grenelle, 1739. Bouchardon died in 1762.

[3] See *Mém. de d'Argenson*, p. 420. And D'Argenson was *personally* the man of all

Digitized by Google

One branch of painting continued to flourish amid the ruins of ideality and imagination; namely, portrait-painting. It was in this that spirit and life took refuge. The art of portrait-painting is personified in that Delatour whose pencil has bequeathed to posterity the images, radiant with intellect, of the celebrated men of the eighteenth century.

It is interesting to follow the variations of costume in the monuments left us by the art of design. At the close of the reign of Louis XIV., the costume was ancient, heavy, stiff, exaggerated, and out of all proportion. The Regency threw down the immense perukes of the men and the high *coiffures* which seemed to place the faces of the women in the middle of their bodies. The dress of the men became richer and less full. Both sexes adopted the custom of covering the head with a white powder, which softened the glance and the features, abolished in some sort the difference of ages, and composed, with the *patches* of the women and the disappearance of all the rest of the beard in the men, physiognomies wholly artificial. The women wore the hair short, and gracefully curled; but their body was not liberated like their head:[1] the absurd hoop skirt, imported from England and Germany, replaced the heavy skirts, inflated, and kept in their place by leaden weights. (towards 1718). The whalebone corset, the scourge of several generations, more than ever stifled their waist, obstructed their respiration, and crushed their chest; a custom which would have seemed to the Greeks an impious extravagance of barbarians, strangers to all sentiment of harmony and beautiful proportions.[2] The women of fashion, instead of courageously breaking through this restraint, endured *full dress* in hours of etiquette, and rid themselves of it, in their every-day life, in favor of a *négligé* so bold and so light, that it called to mind the transparent veils, the *vent tissu*, of the Roman ladies of the Empire.[3] The fantastic and

others most remote from the vices of the times; but, in point of art, men *had eyes, but saw not!* Voltaire was little more enlightened in this respect through his literary taste and the prodigious sagacity of his mind than was D'Argenson through the integrity of his heart.

[1] This deliverance was not lasting: in the second half of the reign of Louis XV., the heads of women were bowed anew beneath a scaffolding even more monstrous than in the time of Madame de Maintenon.

[2] The fashion of hoop-skirts was the cause of the formation of a new company for the whale-fishery. — See Lémontei, t. II. p. 332.

[3] The *négligé* had fatal commercial consequences. It necessitated the fabrication of light stuffs, such as our old manufacturing regulations had not foreseen. The government did not know how to make the regulations conform to the new necessities; and England and Holland, more adroit, supplied us by a contraband trade.

Digitized by Google

voluptuous *négligé* of Parabère and Pompadour was the true antithesis to the stiff and sombre dress of Madame de Maintenon. There was scarcely less difference between the *ruelles* of the seventeenth century and those perfumed *boudoirs*[1] in which the beautiful ladies of the eighteenth century received men of rank, wits, and worldly abbés, during their toilettes.[2]

Influences at once exciting and enervating acted everywhere on the body and the soul, and combined with the extreme facility of intercourse in transforming the moral state of society. We have spoken of the principal places where society might be scrutinized assembled, — the drawing-rooms, the coffee-houses, and the theatres. In these, wit was the ruling power; but there was another place of meeting, which exercised perhaps a more important action on morals. This was the public masked ball, an innovation of the Regency (1716), which became a veritable social, or rather anti-social institution, and which was to the France of the eighteenth century what the voluptuous mysteries of the religious worship of Asia had been to Roman society.[3] A whirlpool of gallant intrigues swept away every thing: the separation of husbands and wives was consummated in these assemblies, where they could not appear together without betraying the incognito which constituted the attraction. Ridicule no longer fell on the deceived, but on the jealous husband: the jealous man became a public enemy. A new code of morals was enunciated: men married to have an heir to their name; then the parties became free on both sides; and not only did they become free to seek other engagements elsewhere, but they would have been ridiculed for not doing so. Good society would not have found derision enough for the love of a husband and a wife.[4] The family tie, already very fragile under the Great

[1] Perfumes, which the antipathy of Louis XIV. had proscribed, and the use of which was passionately resumed in the eighteenth century, must have contributed, as much as coffee, to over-excite the nerves. The increasing use of tobacco, by irritating the mucous membrane, also had its influence on the organization. This strange taste, borrowed from the savages and derided by Voltaire, contrasts strongly with the fastidious neatness and delicate sensuality of the age that propagated it.

[2] A custom much more indecent than the toilet receptions was the employment of male chambermaids for women. The weakening of the sentiment of modesty in fashionable women was remarked by all kinds of modifications in habits. The general substitution of accoucheurs for midwives, which has become so common that no one is any longer shocked by it, dates from this epoch. — See Lémontei, t. II. ch. xxi.

[3] The Chevalier de Bouillon first conceived the idea of converting theatres into ball-rooms for masked balls by means of a movable floor. He received a pension of six thousand francs for this invention.

[4] This was the *Préjugé à la mode*, attacked in one of the first works of Nivelle de

Digitized by Google

King, was thus dissolved in the higher classes, and weakened in the middle and lower classes, which were invaded by adroit seduction, by gross corruption, and by example.

In the Middle Ages, also, the chivalric spirit had attacked the unity of marriage, but for the purpose of separating ideal love from the lower realities, the vulgarities of actual life: a rash effort, outside of the normal development of life; but an heroic effort, after all, for the very reason that it was impossible to sustain it otherwise than in an exceptional state. The eighteenth century, on its side, tended to destroy love after marriage, sentiment after law, chivalrous morality after the morality of the Church. Two Englishmen, a novelist and a statesman, enunciated the theory of this new code of morals, which attained nowhere but in France what may be called the perfection of elegant corruption, but which the rest of Europe practised with a species of naïveté in the southern countries, and of brutality in those of the north: they enunciated this theory, the one to anathematize it, the other to preach it to his own son in familiar letters not designed to see the light! The highest model, to Chesterfield, is Cæsar, who knew how to be at once the first man of pleasure and the first man of business of his time; the husband of all women, and the master of all men. Gallant intrigues formed and dissolved by the senses, by vanity, by the most superficial charms of the mind, by interests and conventionality, — this is what he substitutes for the ideal constancy and unity in the passion taught by the Middle Ages. He does not go so far as absolutely to deny love; but it is evident that it is to him an unknown god. Richardson, the other Englishman, shows something worse in his celebrated novel, animated with such powerful and thrilling reality.[1] Chesterfield has only presented brilliant, frivolous, and shallow corruption, which makes love a reciprocal fancy or an *arrangement*,[2] instead of an adoration: Richardson shows vice elevated to

la Chaussée, who attempted to create the plebeian drama by substituting, in comedy, interest in situations and passions for interest in characters and humor. The attempt was lacking in genius. Despite the corruption of the Regency, the most frivolous women were still seen, at this epoch, courageously following the ancient custom of shutting themselves up with their husbands ill of the small-pox, and exposing themselves to death for them as if they had loved them with the greatest fidelity. Another very remarkable fact in the contrary direction was the introduction of the habit of stipulating in the marriage contract that the wife should not be obliged to reside on her husband's estates. — See Lémontei, t. II. p. 277.

[1] *Clarissa Harlowe.*

[2] "An *arrangement* is as necessary a part of the woman of fashion's establishment as her house, stable, coach, etc."—Letter of June 5, 1750.

Digitized by Google

tragic proportions, systematic seduction pursuing with cold and violent perfidy whatever virtue and true sentiment still subsists in the heart of woman; the seducer transformed into a sort of hero resplendent with infernal glory. *Lovelace* is the *Antichrist* of love. This strange figure did not lack models: Lovelace was only a Richelieu greater and more earnest in evil. Maurice de Saxe expressed an exceptional shade; he had not that serpent-like coldness: impetuous in vice as in battle, he was an Homeric Ajax, devoid of moral sense, thrown amidst a refined system of civilization, and capable of odious and generous acts according as his frenzy impelled him.[1] But whether Lovelace, in the real world, was called Richelieu or Maurice de Saxe, if the character and the means differed, the result was the same, — it was still the idol of former times become a plaything. The greatness of the chivalric ideal had been the voluntary submission of strength to weakness, under which a moral force hitherto unrevealed was instinctively felt. The chivalric ideal had not contented itself with radically denying the inferiority of woman; an inferiority, the idea of which had reposed, in antiquity, on an imperfect knowledge of the laws of life and history: it had audaciously proclaimed the superiority of the sex which more especially represented the principle of sentiment, over the strong and reasoning sex. Now, women reigned no longer except in appearance; for their moral sovereignty was undermined, and all respect for them was disappearing, not without the connivance of most among them. A truly satanic persecution was exercised, no longer by brute force, as formerly, but by refined and satiated wit, against sentiment, which was all their strength. The sensualism of this time was worse, in certain respects, than that of the ancients, because it was less instinctive, and more perverse, — because it was a perversion of the mind, rather than an over-excitement of the senses.

Mark what was written, just before the middle of this century, by one of the best men of this generation, — the minister who had endeavored to restore a national policy to France.

"The heart is a faculty of which we are daily divesting ourselves for want of exercise, while the mind is becoming sharpened and whetted. We are becoming wholly intellectual beings; . . . but I predict that this kingdom will perish through the extinction

[1] A disgraceful stain on his life is his persecution of Madame Favert, that charming actress, whom he importuned, terrified, then imprisoned in a convent, because she attempted to free herself from his tyrannical passion. The police, under a government falling to decay, became the infamous instrument of all the vicious men of power.

Digitized by Google

of the faculties that are derived from the heart. Men no longer have friends; they no longer love their mistresses: how can they love their country? . . . We are daily losing that beautiful part of ourselves styled sensibility. Love, and the need of loving, are disappearing from the earth. . . . Interested calculations now absorb every moment: every thing is devoted to the commerce of intrigue. . . . The internal flame is dying out for want of fuel. Paralysis is gaining the heart. . . . It is by following the gradations from the love of thirty years ago to that of to-day that I prophesy its speedy extinction."[1]

We have spoken thus far of little else than the upper strata of society: this has been inevitable. It was there that the revolution in manners was effected which was destined to react on the rest of the nation, as it is there that we are about to see the commencement of the revolution in ideas. The bourgeoisie yielded in great part to the example of the men of fashion, while feeling instinctively that the decline of the nobility was working in their favor. As to the masses of the people, the peasant, bowed by want over his plough, was ignorant of what was passing above him; and the mechanic of the towns was careless and gay so long as bread was not dear. Nevertheless, they were ceasing to endure with patience the privileges of the *vale taille;* they were becoming disenchanted with many things; and a few remarkable incidents will speedily show that royalty was already far distant from the days of the *return from Metz*. Meanwhile, the people contributed their quota to the corruption of the epoch by the thirty-two thousand prostitutes of Paris.[2]

One of the vices most dangerous to public order, because it attacked men simultaneously by two powerful passions, cupidity and the thirst for excitement, — play, — had assumed frightful proportions since the economic tempests of Law. In 1722, Dubois, by authorizing public gaming-houses (academies of play), opened the dikes, and suffered the temptation to descend to the classes which had hitherto encountered no other peril than the tavern. The greatest nobles — the Carignans (of the royal blood of Sardinia), the Nassaus, the De Gesvres, the De Tresmes, the Armagnacs, the Listenais, the Du Roures — kept public gaming-tables at their residences, and farmed them out for large sums to croupiers. Before the

[1] *Mém. de d'Argenson*, p. 417.

[2] See Dulaure, *Hist. de Paris*, t. VI. p. 309, 6th edition. — See the sad details of the *Chronique* of 1742, edited by an agent of the secret police. "The number of mothers who prostituted their daughters daily became greater." —*Revue rétrospective*, t. V. p. 38.

Digitized by Google

public gaming-houses had been authorized, a princess of eighteen, one of the daughters of the Regent, Mademoiselle de Valois, on her way to Italy to marry the Duke of Modena, had journeyed slowly through France, stopping at every town to gather about her the élite of the country around a green table loaded with heaps of gold. She seemed the demon of play, as her sister, the Duchess of Berry, had seemed the demon of lust and intoxication.[1] (1720).

In expatiating on the manners of the higher classes, we come to the highest of all, the princes and sovereigns. Here it was very different. The men of rank covered every thing with a gloss of politeness, and were restrained, to a certain point, by the necessity of mutual respect, by good education, at least external, and by the limits — very insufficient, it is true — which the laws and public authority set to their power of doing evil. The princes, on their side, were necessarily badly brought up, since they had no equals, and were not compelled to observe reciprocity towards any one; and they had nothing to fear from the laws, since the progress of absolute power had set them almost everywhere above the laws. Their vices, shamelessly displayed in broad daylight, rose, therefore, to crime or madness. The courts of Europe presented a monstrous picture: the Farneses and Medicis dying out, rendered sterile by the most ignominious habits; Augustus II. of Poland, that Hercules of debauchery, with his three hundred and fifty-four bastards; Don John V. of Portugal, a compound of extravagant contradictions, gross and lettered, superstitious and unbridled, who made a seraglio of a convent of three hundred nuns, which he only entered escorted by his confessor; the King of Sardinia, who, guaranteed from all scruple by the authorization of the Archbishop of Turin, imprisoned his father, who, after voluntarily abdicating the throne, was suspected of wishing to ascend it again; the King of Prussia, Frederick William, a half-bigoted, half-cynical wild beast, who beat women, and ministers of the gospel, in the streets, caused his son's mistress to be publicly whipped, and his friend decapitated, ordering the young prince to be held by force at the window while the head of his friend rolled on the scaffold, then attempted to throw his daughter out of the window; the Elector of Hanover, who, before becoming the King of England, George I., had caused the lover of his young wife, whom he had for-

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, t. II. p. 291; Saint-Simon, t. XVII. p. 305; Lémontei, t. II. p. 309; *Mémoires du marquis de Mirabeau*, ap. *Revue rétrospective*, t. III. By way of compensation, a certain degree of probity was introduced into play, in which the courtiers under Louis XIV. had scrupled little at cheating.

Digitized by Google

saken for ignoble and ridiculous favorites, to be thrown alive into an oven, then kept the unhappy princess shut up during her whole life in the donjon of a castle in Lower Saxony; and George II., reputed to be the son of the lover burned alive, and not of George I., who, less atrocious, but not more honest, than the latter, stole the will of George I. to avoid paying the legacies which were found inserted in it; upon which his nephew, the Great Frederick, wrote to him that he deserved the galleys, which well-nigh procured Europe the spectacle of a duel between the two monarchs.[1] The most hideous acts of infamy polluted certain of the petty courts of Germany. The Imperial Palace of Vienna, under Charles VI. and Maria Theresa, formed an exception by its rigid morals; but, in compensation, the House of Austria showed all the harshness of that narrow devotion which is based on the fear of hell, instead of on the love of God and of mankind. As to Russia, every change of reign, and they were frequent, was a classic tragedy, with plots, daggers, poison, and proscriptions. Peter the Great was reputed to have been poisoned by his wife, and his wife by her favorite, which is doubtful; but no doubt exists as to the appalling executions that signalized each palace revolution, till the Czarina Elizabeth definitively commuted the massacres to deportation to the frozen hell of Siberia.

It must be admitted that this review of the European monarchies greatly rehabilitates the memory of Louis XIV., and gives rise to admiration that an absolute king could have remained comparatively so honest a man. It should also be admitted that the House of Bourbon, with its Orleans sunk in orgies, and its Condés, basely covetous or maniacs of lustful cruelty, were only on a level with the rest of the sovereign houses, and that the Regency did not deserve to be the scapegoat of all the excesses of Europe. The King of Portugal, with his confessor and his three hundred nuns, was quite equal to the Regent and Madame de Berry, with their sacrilegious communions on quitting their orgies.[2] Louis XV. had given thus far his fully sufficient share of scandal: but this was only a prelude; and to him was reserved the mournful honor of exceeding the average of princely corruption, and of

[1] See P. Chasles, *Revue des Deux Mondes* of April 15, 1844.

[2] It was an honorable trait in the courtiers, that, from the death of the Regent, the Knights of the Holy Ghost abstained from communicating at the annual mass of their order; being no longer willing to lend themselves to a usage which was nothing but a profanation of religious rites in the existing state of morals. — See Lémontei, t. II. p. 302.

Digitized by Google

effacing the vices of the Regent by vices baser and more cowardly. He had still many degrees to descend before reaching the bottom of that ocean of pollution in which he was to remain buried!

The princes of the Church were not more exemplary than the temporal princes. In truth, the pollution here did not reach to the highest rank: we neither witness the reappearance on the chair of St. Peter of the horrible scandals of the fifteenth, nor of the fanatical frenzy of the sixteenth centuries. The popes of the eighteenth century made little noise in the world: they were men of peaceful and decent manners, and seemed to strive to present as little cause as possible for the storm that was gathering. Benedict XIII. was even a godly man: Benedict XIV. (1740), despite somewhat singular manners and language, was an enlightened, sensible, and upright man. But if the Sacred College, through the instinct of preservation, suitably filled the Holy See, it gave ample indemnification in its own bosom to the spirit of evil. To speak only of France, never had any thing been seen like the group of cardinals formed around Dubois, and flanked by a large number of archbishops and bishops worthy to follow in their train. Habitual intrigue of the blackest and vilest kind was only a venial sin in this satanic conclave, where simony, swindling, incest, and unnatural vice, were enthroned in the guise of the red hat. The Church of France no longer existed except through a few scattered waifs from a vast shipwreck. An admirable genius exhausted itself in maintaining the moral tradition of generations which were no more, — that Massillon who seems the last pillar of a fallen temple. The successor of Bourdaloue, consecrated in some sort by Bourdaloue himself, he had given utterance in the last days of Louis XIV. to new accents full of emotion; then had pronounced over the grave that had just received the Great King the words, "*God alone is great, my brethren;*" and, in all his teachings to the powerful of earth, he had endeavored to blend the religious maxims of Bossuet, softened by a spirit of tolerance,[1] with the political maxims of Fénelon, marked by a more vital and more plebeian tone. The *divine right* of Bossuet was left far behind. Massillon repeated, with an eloquence which was his alone, the principles that re-

[1] In the *Oraison funèbre de Louis* XIV., and in the *Discours de réception à l'Académie* (1719), he blames the abuses of the stage, and not the stage itself. He praises the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in the *Oraison funèbre*, but seems to attempt to gain pardon for this panegyric, necessitated by his subject and his vocation, by interpolating an anathema on the massacre of St. Bartholomew, which was not required by his subject.

Digitized by Google

sounded around him in all the polemical writings of the Regency concerning the duties of kings and the character of royalty, considered as having been originally only a pure delegation from the people.[1] He strove thus to pave the way for a compromise between the Church and royalty on the one hand, and the age on the other. The rulers of the day responded, not by confiding Louis XV. to him to bring up like another Duke of Burgundy, but by imposing on him the mission of consecrating Dubois the successor of Fénelon. The good man, in a moment of weakness, fell into this snare laid by an ironical demon. Massillon was in his turn the victim of this corrupt government, which he had lately stigmatized with so much energy in his *Petit-Carême*. Twenty years of virtue redeemed this mournful day, and Massillon (deceased in 1742) left a name respected in religious tradition: he attained, through pathos of sentiment, the height reached by Bossuet through logical force, and remains among the purest models of language;[2] but his individual glory saved nothing, strengthened nothing.

In the ranks of the Jansenists, or the decided Gallicans, a few men of merit and virtue still honored the Church, and preserved themselves from enervation by a little sectarian exaggeration: the most eminent was Rollin, that candid old man, who has remained the type among us of the noble vocation of teaching.[3] But the *convulsionist* follies, by degrees, brought this party into discredit. On the opposite side, in the party of the Jesuits, there were also a few virtuous men, but narrower and more contracted: a few pious prelates, like Belzunce at Marseilles, and, later, Christophe de Beaumont at Paris, served as instruments to the adroit. The Jesuits were fully conscious that something else was needed to sustain themselves; and with the profound policy bequeathed to them by their founder, at the moment when they felt the higher classes escaping them, they invented a means of action on the masses of the people, — a rite, almost a new religious worship, adapted to strike the grossest imaginations by a touching mate-

[1] See *Œuvres de Massillon*, Lefèvre's edition, 1838, t. III. p. 866.

[2] He defines taste as "arbitrary, and regulated by conventionalities and customs like eloquence," t. III. p. 499. Taste is as fundamental a quality in him as pathos. We have not the courage to reproach him with some redundance, which, as well as gentleness, he has in common with Fénelon.

[3] His excellent *Traité des Études* was written in 1726. He was fully conscious from that time of what Duclos was later to express so vividly in his *Considérations sur les Mœurs*, — the danger of sacrificing education to instruction, morality to the intellect. The *Ancient History* of Rollin, which enjoys so great a publicity, but which causes us to love the author more than it truly makes known the spirit of antiquity, appeared from 1730 to 1738.

Digitized by Google

rial representation. Towards the close of the past century, a poor nun of the Visitation, who bore a soul enthusiastic to delirium in a body diseased and ungraceful by nature, had caused disturbance in the Convent of Parai-le-Monial, near Autun, by the insane tortures that she inflicted on herself;[1] her pretended conversations with Jesus Christ, and her conflicts with the Devil, who appeared to her in the figure of a *Moor* with glittering eyes, threw her from her chair, and harassed her unceasingly. A physical circumstance, probably an aneurism, the suffering from which mingled with her trances, appears to have given a particular direction to her devotion. She imagined that Jesus Christ had shown her his burning heart in his open breast, and she talked unceasingly of the *sacred heart of Jesus*. All the mystics had spoken of it with vivid images, a thing quite in conformity with the spirit of Christian symbolism; but no one had had the idea of materializing this symbol, — of displaying a bleeding heart on the altars, and making it the rallying sign of an affiliation. Two Jesuits conceived this idea; incarnated the visions of the nun of the Visitation, Marie Alacoque; and presented this poor creature as an inspired being, commissioned by Christ to teach the adoration of his *heart* on earth. The new revelation, at first ill received by the Gallican Church, had little effect for thirty years after the death of Marie Alacoque (deceased in 1690): it was not until during the *Plague of Marseilles*, that the Bishop Belzunce, instigated by the Jesuits, gave a great éclat to it by consecrating his diocese to the *Sacred Heart of Jesus*. A prelate, who is far from meriting the same respect as Belzunce, the Bishop of Soissons, Languet, undertook to strike a decisive blow by publishing the life of the *blessed woman* (1729). This book, in which an intriguer, reared between the Duboises and the Tencins, sought to ape the pious naïveté of the legendaries, fell to the ground amidst universal hisses. The well-prepared machine failed in its effect: the court of Rome maintained a prudent reserve: the *Sacred Heart* returned to obscurity, and the parliament dispersed its affiliations. But the Jesuits never abandon a plan once adopted; and France was again to see the *Sacred Heart*, after more than sixty years, shine like a sinister meteor in the civil war of the Vendée; then later, by a new transformation, reappear, and pursue its invasion under a more pacific aspect.[2]

[1] She cut the name of Jesus Christ on her breast with a pen-knife; then poured boiling wax into it. The rest was in harmony with this.

[2] *La Vie de la Bienheureuse Mère Marie-Marguerite*, by M. J. J. Languet, Bishop of

Digitized by Google

As to the present, Marie Alacoque was swallowed up in the ridicule, which, finally, also ingulfed her rival, the blessed Pâris, at first better received by the public as the enemy of the Jesuits. The same discredit involved the two great religious factions. Society, although vicious itself, despised the clergy both for its vices and its superstitions, as teaching what it did not believe, or as believing in absurdities: necessary and fundamental articles of faith were confounded in ironical doubt with abuses and errors. All religious, moral, and political traditions were shaken by the acts, and often even by the ideas, of those very persons who existed only by these traditions; that is to say, the temporal and spiritual princes, if, however, pure negations can be called ideas. All respect was lost in the world. Social superiority was destroyed by its own hands. Before positive equality, the equality of rights, had made its way into public favor through the teachings of philosophy, minds had already begun to accept a negative equality, founded on contempt for others rather than on self-respect, on the degradation of what was above them rather than on the elevation of what was beneath them. This progress by means of negation and subversion, this progress through the *critical spirit*, was destined to lead the new world to the conquest of utter negation, if

Soissons, 1729, 4to, Paris; Lémontei, *Hist. de la Régence*, t. II. p. 442. He gives very curious details. It is known that the insurgents of the Vendée wore the *Sacred Heart* on their breast. Two religious institutions of a purer origin coincide with the first renown of the *Sacred Heart:* these were the *Daughters of Sainte-Martha*, established in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine in 1722 by the widow of the sculptor Théodon; and the *Brothers of the Christian Schools*, founded in 1725 by a canon of Rheims, — Jean de la Salle. The spirit that had presided over the foundation of the great institutions of the seventeenth century reappeared in these societies, called forth by the idea of remedying the neglect in which the children of the people were vegetating. The *Daughters of Sainte-Martha*, a Jansenist institution, devoted itself to instructing young girls and taking care of the sick: their institution has survived to our days, without greatly increasing. The growth of the schools for boys of the *Brothers of the Christian Schools*, the counterpart of this institution in spirit, has been immense. These orders rendered services and possessed incontestable virtues, counterbalanced by objections which were scarcely perceptible under the ancient régime, but which grew more apparent in proportion as the institutions became democratic. Every religious congregation devoted to active life tends to become a petty State within a State, — a State which knows only its special laws and the general laws of the Church, and which, disregarding the *divine right* of the country, sees in civil and political law only a fact, and not a duty. To rear citizens, it is necessary to have the principles and the sentiments of a citizen: to rear subjects, this was not so necessary. Another objection was the almost inevitable relation that was established between this modest and humble body, designed for primary instruction, and the more learned and able body, that aimed at taking possession of secondary instruction and of the children of the classes in easy circumstances, and which could scarcely fail to impose its books and tendencies on the former.

Digitized by Google

the principle of sentiment did not awaken in time to bring back affirmation and life.

We have just cited a remarkable passage from D'Argenson. As early as 1704, in the year of the death of Bossuet, and eleven years before the death of Louis XIV., when *authority* still seemed to rule the world, the greatest philosopher of Europe had written the following words in his refutation of Locke: "Like opinions (opinions opposed to the existence of Providence and of responsibility in another life), insinuating themselves by degrees into the spirit of the great men who regulate others, and who govern public affairs, and gliding into fashionable books, are preparing all things for the general *revolution* with which Europe is threatened, and consummating the destruction of whatever is left in the world of the generous sentiments of the ancient Greeks and Romans, who preferred the love of country and of the public good, and the care for posterity, to fortune, and even to life. These *public-spirited* men, as the English call them, are greatly diminishing; and they will decrease more when they cease to be supported by the good morals and true religion which natural reason itself teaches us. . . . Men openly deride the love of country; they ridicule those who care for the public; and, when any well-intentioned man talks of what will become of posterity, they answer, Let the future take care of itself. But it may occur to these persons (the great), that they will experience themselves the evils that they believe reserved for others. . . . If this epidemical disease of the mind continues to increase, Providence will correct men by the very revolution to which it must give birth; for, whatever may happen, every thing will always tend to the general good, . . . although this should not and cannot take place without the chastisement of those who have even contributed to this good by their bad deeds."[1]

SECTION II. — VOLTAIRE AND MONTESQUIEU.

We have been able to sketch the picture of social manners without naming a single one of the great contemporary innovators. The reason of this has been, that the philosophers of the eighteenth century did not create this condition of minds and hearts: it existed before any of them appeared. This moral state marks

[1] Leibnitz, *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement humain*, liv. iv. ch. xvi. — See the edition of M. Amédée Jacques, p. 480; Paris, 1844.

Digitized by Google

the transition from the age of Descartes to the age of Voltaire and Rousseau: it is the night between two long days; two days very different, it is true, and one of which was as stormy as the other had been serene. The philosophers were born in the surroundings which we have described: we shall see how they modified them. Born in pure criticism, we shall see what they succeeded in affirming.

Before accosting those to whom this age has given preëminently the name of *philosophers*, the leaders of schools and parties, a few more observations on the movement of serious literature, and on the second-rate men who preceded or surrounded the geniuses of the age, will complete, as it were, the frame in which these great figures are to be placed.

We have touched on imaginative literature in depicting society: as to scientific literature and the sciences proper, there were, in the first period of the age, marked fluctuations, a restless expectation, experiments, numerous innovations, all the characteristics of a transitional epoch such as we have just described with respect to manners. Cartesianism ruled in the Academy of Sciences and in the enlightened portion of Jansenism and Gallicanism. Despite the decision of the Sorbonne, fallen into disuse, it had reconquered the religious bodies of instruction, and encroached upon the Jesuits themselves. The champions of the past, who had been its bitter enemies during the period of its strength and growth, compromised it by demanding of it an asylum, now that its real power was in an inverse ratio to its increase: like an overflowing river, now that it covered every thing, it had become shallow. The great geniuses had disappeared, Malebranche in 1715, Leibnitz in 1719; and no one in France could claim their inheritance. Christian Cartesianism was represented by the Chancellor d'Aguesseau, the Cardinal de Polignac, and the Jesuit Buffier; the Spinozist tendency, by Mairan, of the Academy of Sciences. Fontenelle, who was, till 1740, the voice and spirit of this academy, sustained Cartesian physics there with unshaken constancy; but his faith was less firm in metaphysics, and sensualistic tendencies manifested themselves in him. None of these men, moreover, had either the initiative or the power necessary to sustain and renew the school.

We shall speedily revert to the movement of the physical sciences: it is sufficient to mention here that public opinion expressed a lively interest in the sciences which acted on nature, and which increased the resources and enjoyments of man.

Digitized by Google

Much less favor was accorded to the study of the past. The labors of erudition were pursued, however, with laudable perseverance. The Benedictines continued to collect and bring to light innumerable materials for the national history. Father Montfaucon, after his prodigious work, *Antiquity Explained* (15 vols. in fol., 1719–1724), published his *Monuments of the French Monarchy* (5 vols. in fol., 1729–1733), an immense work, in which it is to be regretted that the bad taste and insipidity of designers incapable of reproducing the types of the Middle Ages should have defeated the intentions of the illustrious archæologist: the idea of placing before the eyes the whole succession of history by means of pictured monuments none the less retains its greatness. By the side of Montfaucon, another Benedictine, Dom Bouquet, entered, by D'Aguesseau's order, upon a magnificent undertaking, formerly conceived by Colbert, the *Collection of the Historians of the Gauls and of France*, the crowning work of all the services of the congregation of Saint-Maur, and the principal basis on which the edifice of the national history was to be established.[1] The *Literary History of France*, commenced by Dom Rivet (1733), was the complement of the great *Collection of Historians*. At the same time, the separate history of the towns and provinces gave rise to very remarkable works, among which appears in the first rank the *History of Languedoc*, by Dom Vaissette, a true masterpiece of its kind (1730–1745). Some lay scholars rivalled the disciples of St. Benedict. The *Collection of the Ordinances of the Kings of France of the Third Race* is the true legislative history of the monarchy. Laurière, who drew the plan of it under Louis XIV., was able at length to begin its execution under the Regent; and Secousse, the author of excellent dissertations on the history of France, worthily replaced Laurière from 1728.

These laborious and slow enterprises, which accumulated mountains of erudition, and which the Regent had had the merit of encouraging, were not sufficiently appreciated by an ardent and impatient generation: the public interest was attracted by historical sciences only in so far as they bordered on politics and philosophy. The innovating spirit began to agitate the heavy masses gathered up by scholars, and to transfuse therein motion and life. The critical genius which Richard Simon had introduced into the

[1] The first eight volumes in folio were published by Dom Bouquet from 1738 to 1754. His fellow-Benedictines continued the work; and the Academy of Inscriptions, the successor to the labors of the Benedictines, has resumed, since the Revolution, the *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules* and the *Histoire littéraire*, and finished the *Recueil des Ordonnances*.

Digitized by Google

Biblical exegesis had just been applied to the elements of general history by a more extended, more brilliant, and more philosophic intellect. Nicolas Fréret[1] had attempted, while still young, to disengage the soul of our national history from all this accumulation of facts and dates. This was in 1714, in the height of the persecution against Jansenism. Fréret began by reading to the Academy of Inscriptions a paper in which he determined the true origin of the Franks: in this dissertation, he shook the bases of the recent *History of France* of the Jesuit Daniel, then in great favor, and invested with the post of historiographer. Fréret was imprisoned in the Bastille, as suspected of Jansenism, and remained there some months.[2] Deeming it impossible to write the national history under an absolute monarchy, he abandoned the extensive researches concerning the state of manners and of the government at different epochs of our annals,[3] which he had commenced, and fell back on remote antiquity; plunging into the obscure labyrinth of the primitive ages with the clew of the Method. "His admirable perspicuity of mind," says a great historian, "brought forth a new science from darkness and chaos. The chronology of the times that have no history, the origin and migrations of nations, the filiation of races and tongues, were for the first time established on rational bases."[4] History thenceforth had laws: it emerged from empiricism, as geography, its faithful auxiliary, had done before with Delisle, the friend of Fréret. Fréret did for the annals of the human race what the creators of geology were destined to do for the history of the globe, and the lost races that inhabited it before man.[5]

[1] We spoke just now of second-rate men. An exception must be made in his favor: he belongs to the first class.

[2] The elegant historian Vertot was more successful: he demolished in a very respectful manner the monarchical fable of the *Sainte-ampoule* (the phial of holy oil used at the coronation of the kings of France), and was not disturbed. He had better chosen his time.

[3] The President Hénault attempted later, in very narrow proportions and in a wholly monarchical spirit, something in accordance with this plan, — the *Abrégé chronologique de l'Hist. de France* (1744); an estimable and useful work, but very different from the bold and powerful spirit of Fréret.

[4] Augustin Thierry, *Considérations sur l'Hist. de France*, ch. i. p. 46, 7th edition. In 1738, a French refugee in Holland, Louis de Beaufort, made a bold application of the critical spirit to the most popular of histories: he overthrew the whole romance of the first ages of Rome, almost at the very moment that the excellent Rollin contented himself, in his *Roman History*, with reproducing Titus Livy.

[5] The titles of a few of Fréret's dissertations may cause the scope of his labors to be appreciated: —

Reflections on the Study of Ancient Histories, and the Degree of Certainty of their Proofs.

Digitized by Google

The science of Fréret, however new it may have been, was still disinterested science, philosophic in method, but with no other end than the knowledge of truth for its own sake. By the side of Fréret, therefore, minds greatly inferior to him obtained a more noisy renown by introducing political and polemical passions into history. We have repeatedly spoken of the Count de Boulainvilliers, on the occasion of his book *The State of France*, and of the projects for reform which he presented to the Regent. It is by another work that he has remained celebrated; that is, by his historico-political system, summed up in the axiom, that *the feudal government is the masterpiece of the human mind.* This theory, set forth in the *History of the Ancient Government of France* and the *Letters on the Parliament*, published in Holland in 1727, after the author's death, had an astonishing and scandalous success. All progress, whether of the royal authority or of the civil and municipal liberties of plebeians, was, to Boulainvilliers, a usurpation detrimental to the rights of the nobility, the sole heirs of the ancient Franks, the conquerors of Gaul. It was impossible to trace back the course of ages with stranger audacity. Men had not yet reached the point of replying to this son of the Franks, as Sieyès was to do, in the name of the Gaulish democracy: they replied in that of the Roman, semi-municipal, semi-monarchical Gaul. A diplomatic abbé, the perpetual secretary of the French

General Views concerning the Origin and Mixture of Ancient Nations.

Defence of the Chronology founded on the Monuments of Ancient History, in opposition to the Chronological System of Newton.

Essay on the Chronology of the Scriptures.

On the Antiquity and Certainty of Chinese Chronology.

Researches with Respect to the Religious and Philosophical Traditions of the Indians, to serve as Preliminaries to the Investigation of their Chronology.

Chronology and History of the Assyrians of Nineveh.

On Egyptian Chronology.

The Cimmerii (Origin of the Gauls).

On the Nature and Religion of the Greeks.

On the Extent of Ancient Philosophy.

The Nature and the best known Dogmas of the Gaulish Religion.

General Principles of the Scriptures.

The Origin and Ancient History of the Earliest Ages of Greece.

The Origin and Ancient History of the Earliest Ages of Italy.

On the Word *Druid*.

On the Word *Merovingian*.

All these papers were first published in the *Recueil* of the Academy of Inscriptions. The essential facts concerning the life and history of this king of historical criticism are found collected in a very interesting report made to the Academy of Inscriptions by its learned perpetual secretary, M. Walckenaer, on the unpublished MSS. of Fréret, 1850. Pertinent to the works on our national origin, it is just to mention Father Pezron's *Traité de l'Antiquité de la nation et de la langue des Celtes ou Gaulois*, 1703.

Digitized by Google

Academy, and the author of a few works on diplomatic polemics, and an excellent book on æsthetics,[1] made the most voluminous and most learned of these replies, dictated by the old bourgeois spirit. In his *Critical History of the Establishment of the French Monarchy* (1734), a work in which profound researches are blended with paradoxical assertions, the Abbé Dubos, instead of replying that the pretended rights of the conquerors had expired by limitation, attempted to prove that there never had been any conquest of the Gauls by the Franks; that the Frankish or French monarchy had succeeded amicably to the rights of the Roman Empire over the Gauls; and that feudalism had been established, purely by means of usurpation, several centuries after. He proved at least — a thing of great importance to our tradition — that the Gallo-Roman municipal régime, the antique civil society, had continued to subsist under the Frankish kings. Public opinion and the scholars pronounced themselves in favor of Dubos: but the quarrel was not ended; and an illustrious authority, Montesquieu, was to interpose therein a mediation not altogether impartial.

Outside of historical systems, political studies proper preoccupied many minds. From 1724 to 1731, a remarkable attempt was made to form a kind of free academy of moral and political sciences, — sciences which had no place in the royal academies. An Abbé Alari, a man of wit and learning, organized at his residence, in an entresol in the Place Vendôme, periodical conferences, where a score of diplomatists, magistrates, and men of letters, met to discuss all kinds of political matters. The ideas of Fénelon, and, above all, of Vauban, prevailed in this assembly, which probably owed to one of its members, Lord Bolingbroke, the English name of the *Club of the Entresol*. This was the first appearance of the word *club* among us. The indefatigable Abbé de Saint-Pierre overwhelmed the *Entresol* with his papers. We have mentioned elsewhere his Utopian scheme of *Universal Peace*, and his efforts for the reformation of taxation. He wished to reform every thing, from legal proceedings to orthography. A man of panaceas, he thought to preserve the State from all evils abroad by the *European Diet*, designed to prevent war; and from all ills at home by the *improved system of balloting*, — a plan of lists of candidates for public functions, to be presented to the King by each category of functionaries, in case of vacancies. A great enemy of useless expenditure, he even went so far as to involve the fine arts in his

[1] *Essai sur le Beau, Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et la Peinture*, 1719.

Digitized by Google

reprobation of pomp and luxury. He nevertheless almost always blended sound ideas with his Utopian projects; as, for instance, concerning the unity of the code, religious tolerance, and the moral improvement of education (*Plan for the Improvement of Education, with a Dissertation on the Greatness and Sanctity of Mankind;* 1728, 12mo). In a letter written towards the close of his life (1740), he expresses a sentiment of touching patriotism: "I am dying of fear," he says, "lest human reason has ceased to grow, and rather at London than at Paris, where the communication of demonstrated truths is, as to the present, less easy." A churchman, he showed himself everywhere religious with conviction and simplicity; but he openly declared himself in favor of the marriage of priests.[1]

The timid Fleuri was terrified at the *Entresol*, and obliged the new academicians to cease their meetings. This movement of theoretical politics, thus arrested, was summed up in a book which did not make all the noise that it deserved, because it was not published until after the author's death, and at an epoch when it was surpassed by works more radical and more brilliant (1765), but which, replaced in the surroundings in which it was written (before 1739), in the highest degree merits the attention of the historian. This was the *Considerations on the Government of France*, by that Marquis d'Argenson whose name recurs so often to our pen. D'Argenson was truly, in this half-century, the first after the men of genius, and often preceded them.

D'Argenson set out, from an experimental fact, the economic inferiority of France, administered, save a few exceptions, by the officers of the central power, compared with countries administered by the local powers, and especially with republics. "France," he says, "is perhaps the only Christian country in which the police is intrusted to royal officers, who are in no manner responsible to the people, and who insult rather than pay deference to their complaints. This is readily perceived in travelling on our frontiers. There is no need of asking where the territory of France ends: the state of the roads, and of every thing that belongs to the public, makes it sufficiently perceptible." What remedy was to be offered for these abuses of arbitrary power, which deprived France of the benefits of the gifts of Nature? The limitation of the royal power by the States-General or the Provincial States?

[1] *Annales politiques*, 1717. — See, for all his other writings, *Ouvrages de Politique et de Morale*, by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre; Rotterdam, 1734-1741, eighteen vols. 12mo. See, concerning the *Entresol*, *Mém. de d'Argenson*.

Digitized by Google

No: the partition of the supreme authority was contrary to the nature of things. *Political philosophers* had vainly extolled the blending of the three monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic elements: one of the the three must always subordinate the rest. The public power should be *one and decided* in a republic as in a monarchy: in a republic, *all the suffrages should be united on one, and from this should proceed the other subordinate powers.* France being a monarchy, all the public power, all the movements of the body of the nation, should belong to the King and his officers; but all the local movements should belong to the localities: by this he meant the repairing of the roads, the apportionment of the taxes, etc., as well as the municipal interests; in a word, he demanded the abolition of the monarchical administration, and absolute administrative decentralization, while preserving political centralization.[1] He hoped in this manner to communicate to the monarchy the advantages of republics. This singular edifice would have had absolute royalty at its summit, and a multitude of petty democracies at its base. The provinces and the generalities, which formed bodies too large, and sometimes dangerous to the central authority, were to disappear, and to be replaced by *departments* of about two hundred parishes. Each department was to be intrusted to an intendant and to triennial sub-delegates, rather inspectors than administrators, invested with power to choose the municipal magistrates from a list sent by the commune, and also with power to remove them. The municipal magistrates (five at least for a commune) were to have the superintendence of all the administration, finances, and police, but without any litigating powers; litigation being wholly within the judicial jurisdiction. The neighboring communes could hold meetings for their common interests with the permission of the intendant (*conseils cantonnaux*).

D'Argenson desired freedom of trade within and without.

The system of *balloting* (lists presented by equals) was also to be applied to the choice of royal officers (this was borrowed from the Abbé de Saint-Pierre). The King was to abolish the vendibility of office; a scourge worse than the feudalism which it had replaced.

It was on the question of the nobility that D'Argenson was the

[1] We find in him the prototype of all the arguments against centralization. "Every thing is done badly and at a high price by the officers of the King. The public works would be kept in better repair, and at less expense, if a decree of the council were no longer needed to mend a broken step or stop a hole," etc.

Digitized by Google

most energetically and most radically innovating. This great lord of feudal origin, this minister of state, made a terrible reply to Boulainvilliers, and gave, half a century in advance, the signal for the *night of the 4th of August*. "Some will say that the principles of the present treatise, in favor of democracy, tend to the destruction of the nobility: *they will not be mistaken*. . . . It could be wished that all the country estates were owned only by those who would cultivate them themselves, and that all estates might be exempt from all duties, and conditions of service. . . . The obligatory redemption of all rights of suzerainty, manorial fees, and rights of the chase, should be authorized. . . . It is only necessary to lay aside the most stupid prejudice, to admit that two things are chiefly to be desired for the good of the State: one, that all the citizens shall be equal among themselves; the other,[1] that each one shall be the son of his works. The nobles are like drones in the hive."

A monarchy without nobility, without a judicial aristocracy, and without a *bureaucracy;* a royalty suspended without props, at an enormous height above a democratic society, — such, therefore, was the dream of D'Argenson, the illusion of a noble heart that sought to reconcile its traditional affections with its new ideas.[2] The political ideal was not destined to stop at this inconsistent position. After the absolute monarchy of Bossuet had come the aristocratic monarchy of Fénelon; after the latter, the democratic monarchy of D'Argenson; after the democratic monarchy, pure democracy was soon to arise with Rousseau. The doctrine of a conditional contract between the King and the people, such as D'Argenson enunciates,[3] is only a transition between the doctrine of the irremovable right of the King and that of the inalienable and always existing sovereignty of the people.

The characteristic of D'Argenson is that he is essentially French

[1] He makes a remarkable distinction between the real and the ideal by saying that we should *seek* absolute equality, though we can *never attain it* (p. 256).

[2] In theory, he prefers the republic. — See his *Mémoires*, t. III. p. 313; see page 312.

[3] It is curious to see this doctrine of the original contract, derogatory to the divine right, insinuate itself even into a diplomatic memorial from the court of Rome in 1736. It is said in this document, which indeed does not bear an official character, that "the Roman people, whose nature it has been from the most ancient times to be unable to accommodate themselves either to entire servitude or entire liberty, have submitted to the peaceful and elective government of the sovereign pontiffs, in order to have assurances of their safety, and of the preservation of public tranquillity." — See *Recueil de Rousset*, t. X.

Digitized by Google

in the truths as in the errors of his system.[1] There is not in him the slightest trace of foreign importation. He proceeded in no wise from that great current from beyond the Channel, which was beginning to inundate us, and which was soon to give us, between D'Argenson and Rousseau, the famous attempt of Montesquieu to systematize historic law.[2] Nothing is more truly French — and too much so — than the idea of unity and simplicity in government.

The *Entresol* appears to have been more circumspect in religion than in politics; and Bolingbroke did not give the tone therein in this respect. D'Argenson, on his part, did not quit Gallicanism, at least ostensibly; and broke with the faith of Bossuet only on the subject of tolerance, which was to him, as to his friend Saint-Pierre, a truly religious dogma. He has left, nevertheless, a significant saying: "Love God; distrust the priests."

The society of the *Entresol*, in being more conciliatory to religious than to political questions, did not follow the leading current of the times; for the great offensive movement of the philosophy of the eighteenth century attacked the spiritual power before the temporal power.

The extraordinary man who directed this movement, and who was, so to speak, the movement itself, had already entered for some years upon his renowned career, when the grave and peaceful attempt of the *Entresol* was made.

In 1707, a child of thirteen, full of vivacity, curiosity, and boldness, was presented to Ninon de l'Enclos, who was approaching the end of her long life. In the incomparable animation of his countenance; in his smile, full of grace, archness, menace, and attraction; in his eye, beaming with lightnings that pierced to the depths of the soul, — the aged Aspasia of the seventeenth century foresaw a great destiny. She wished to aid in the development of this young intellect, and bequeathed a legacy to the boy to purchase books. The child, who belonged to a family of the middle class in very easy circumstances, was educated in the Jesuit College (the College Louis-le-Grand), where he was the admiration of his professors through his literary faculties, and their terror through the independence of his character and ideas. One of them, Father Le Jai, predicted of him that he would be the

[1] The most salient of his errors is the absorption, in all degrees, of the legislative in the executive power.

[2] An attempt which is very far from belonging wholly to Montesquieu, as we shall see directly.

Digitized by Google

Corypheus of Deism in France. Ninon and Le Jai had both judged rightly. The successor of the *free-thinkers* of the past century, he was destined to reign over this little tribe, become an immense people, and to lead them to battle against his masters. The Jesuits, by one of those sublime mockeries of which history is full, had reared the two most formidable enemies of traditional authority, — DESCARTES and VOLTAIRE.[1] Voltaire was thus, from college, all that he was to be in the future. No man, through more external mobility, was ever at heart more faithful to himself.

On leaving college, introduced at the Temple, at the house of the Grand-Prior de Vendôme, and in the other societies where the spirit of Ninon ruled, and where men protested by the religion of pleasure against the gloomy devotion of Versailles, he became the disciple and imitator of the aged Abbé de Chaulieu, who was the poet and philosopher of this little epicurean world.[2] It was not the best entrance into life for a young man. These adversaries of Christianity had resumed the manners, like the opinions, of the decline of antiquity. Atheism, or absolute scepticism, existed among them on good terms with epicurean Deism; and the monstrous vices which at that time infected the court nobility were tolerated by these disciples of the *law of Nature*. Voltaire received a bent there that was never effaced. Personally above all suspicion as to degrading vices, he lost, at least, the natural sentiment of abhorrence that they inspire, and saw in them little more than a defect of taste, a subject for derision. His temperament and his mind, alike fastidious, preserved him from all excesses; but he admitted no other law of morality than a certain moderation in pleasure as in all things. Retrograding beyond the ideal of the Middle Ages, he confounded voluptuousness with love: to the asceticism which placed virtue in celibacy, in the negation of the law of life, he replied by a contrary exaggeration, excluding, in point of fact, the idea of virtue from whatever concerned the relations of the

[1] François Marie Arouet was born at Paris, February 20, 1694, and not, as was long believed, at Châtenai, near Sceaux. He was the son of an ex-notary, become treasurer of the Chamber of Accounts at Paris: his mother was a native of Poitiers. He took the name of Voltaire, on his entrance into the world, to distinguish him from his elder brother. It was a very general custom among the wealthy bourgeoisie to distinguish each son by the name of an estate: the same was sometimes done with the daughters.

[2] Another free-thinker, Châteauneuf, had introduced Voltaire both at the house of Ninon and at the Temple. Châteauneuf had cradled him, while a child, in infidelity. Voltaire, at three years of age, knew the *Mosaïde* by heart; a piece of verse attributed to Jean Baptiste Rousseau, in which Moses was treated as an impostor. — See the *Vie de Voltaire* by the Abbé Duvernet, Geneva, 1788.

Digitized by Google

sexes. All virtue was comprised, to him, in *doing good to mankind*, in aiding men to be as happy as possible in this life. From his earliest youth, he had reduced this morality to a system. He applied thereto an earnest conviction which never contradicted itself. The tolerance which he showed to dissoluteness of morals he never showed to injustice and to oppression; above all, to the oppression that takes religion for a pretext. A wretched and meanly cruel persecution was the first object that awakened his conscience. The edict of 1715 against the Protestants, and the *lettres de cachet* against the Jansenists, opened his eyes, and evoked in his memory the whole series of calamities inflicted on Europe by the religious quarrels, from the extermination of the Albigenses to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. A passionate and implacable contempt and hatred of the fanaticism and hypocrisy that had rendered these quarrels so fatal to the human race, very different from the cold antipathy of Bayle, entered his soul. This contempt and hatred extended to the subjects themselves of these quarrels, lightly examined, and cast aside as absurd or incomprehensible. He did not stop, like Bayle, at universal doubt: he adopted the religion of Chaulieu, a God maintained by common sense in opposition to the universal negation of Atheism or absolute scepticism; a creative God, conscious of his creation, but not communicating with it, and imposing on man no other law than the very indulgent law of Nature. As to the immortality of the soul, he had nothing but confused ideas and doubts.[1]

This was a very poor and very sterile groundwork of faith. Voltaire was not long in attempting to add to it a philosophic conception of the order of creation; but his religious needs were not imperious enough to impose great efforts on him, or to lead him very far. An essentially active and polemic genius, with little depth and immense surface, he rejected what was profound like what was obscure, what was abstract like what was subtle, and turned with instinctive repugnance from every thing that was mysterious. His mind, always eager to live outside of itself, and to diffuse itself in things in order to modify and transform them, offered a radical opposition to the father of modern philosophy, Descartes; and it was through this very opposition, the foundation of his incompleteness, but also of his strength, that Voltaire became the king of his age. The inheritor of Bayle's aversion to systems and hypotheses, he carried it so far as to condemn all investigation of causes, all dogmatic affirmation, save the first

[1] See the *Épître à M. de la Faluère*, 1710.

Digitized by Google

cause, verified through its effects by a sort of empiricism. He scarcely ever quitted the visible and the palpable. Through the absence of the metaphysical and synthetical faculties, and through the extreme power of the critical spirit in his intellectual organization, practical reason, which was really his distinctive stamp, was divorced in him, and in all the philosophy of his time, from pure reason. Sentiment was separate, in his soul, from the ideal and the infinite, and had nothing but the finite, the present life and humanity, for its end. He believed in God through good sense, rather than through sentiment. "God is to him," it has been said with much justice, "rather a truth than a being: he comprehends his necessity; he does not seem to feel his presence."[1]

The qualities of his heart were in harmony with those of his mind: like arduous and abstract meditations, profound and concentrated passions were unknown to him. His sensibility was unceasingly at work for every one and every thing. Self-conscious, after the manner of women and poets, that is, of nervous organizations, but not at all selfish; with a hand and heart always open; irritable and generous; vindictive, and ready to pity, — vivacity took the place of depth in his feelings as in his ideas; but, by a gift most rare, vivacity did not exclude duration in his affections, any more than a certain distrustful timidity, the result of an organic delicacy that was susceptible to the most trifling impressions, excluded a firm courage of mind, and a will steadfastly devoted to the triumph of his convictions. From the beginning, he had discerned a twofold end, of which he never lost sight through the weaknesses, failings, and tempests of his life, — to oppose what he judged to be wrong, and to win renown: the interest of humanity and the interest of his ambition were never separated in his thought. It was impossible to demand of such a nature, wholly militant and wholly external, semi-political and semi-artistic, the indifference to worldly things of a Descartes or a Spinoza. We are about to witness the working of the literary faculties which he employed in the service of his pretensions and opinions. As is the case with all first-rate writers, he modified the forms of speech as well as the substance of ideas. The clearness of his thought, that seems to play on surfaces inundated with sunshine; his light and sparkling style; his airy and charming turn of expression; his hatred of whatever was bombastic, pretentious, and affected; his exquisite taste in simplicity; his subtleness in truth; his inexhaustible fluency; his infinite flexibility of

[1] E. Bersot, *Liberté de penser* of December 15, 1847.

Digitized by Google

mind,—were qualities at once essentially French, and essentially adapted to the objects pursued by Voltaire.

He had begun his career by a few bad odes, a rhetorical exercise, and by some familiar, amorous, and satirical verses full of fire and ease, which won for him an early experience of the abuses of arbitrary power. Banished a first time from Paris by *lettre de cachet* in 1716, he was thrown into the Bastille, in the following year, by the *indulgent* Regency, just as the Jansenist prisoners had quitted it. A very caustic piece of verse against the memory of the late King was imputed to him; a piece which was actually the work of a Jansenist. He remained under lock and key until the Regent, at last convinced of his innocence, ordered him to be set at liberty with a sort of pecuniary indemnity (April 10, 1718). This year of captivity had not been lost by young Arouet. He had employed it in numerous works; and scarcely was he free, when he launched upon the French stage his tragedy of *Œdipus*, written almost immediately after leaving college, and revised in the silence of the Bastille. It was the opening of his career. He was twenty-four. The success was prodigious. On beholding the reappearance of the sparkling verse, the brilliant imagery, the vivacity and harmony of style, that had been already long unknown to the stage, men fancied that Corneille and Racine were about to reappear. They were mistaken. It was not in grand poetry that Voltaire was to manifest his true genius, and all that marvellous assemblage of brilliant qualities which we have just pointed out. The tragic poetry of Voltaire has only a false air of Racinian elegance and Cornelian strength. His often declamatory force lacks depth and solidity, his elegance lacks purity and precision: almost dazzling, high-sounding improprieties, and the excessive use of the periphrasis, ill disguise the looseness of his thought and style. The absence of all sentiment of the antique, so well proved by his *Letter on Sophocles*, which served as a commentary to *Œdipus*, was not the smallest objection to be made to Voltaire. It was not only the antique, the genius of the primitive times, but the very foundation of poetry, that Voltaire was never to comprehend. His intellect, wholly diffused in external things, was not permitted to know the inspiration drawn from the eternal springs of the soul, or the mysteries of that divine symbolism which connects the visible with the invisible world, and which is the essence of poetry. As to that which is not the essence, but the form, of poetry, — the art of verse, — this art is so difficult in our language, that it demands the whole man; and Voltaire

Digitized by Google

only gave it a part of himself, the smallest part. Every thing savors in Voltaire — and this applies to all his plays — of the haste of a man who is conscious of a thousand other thoughts at the very moment when he seizes the tragic lyre: he does not take the art in earnest; it is only a brilliant play of his imagination.[1] There is but one thing in it that seems to him important, — the opportunity to launch his ideas, and to convert them into maxims in lofty verse for the use of the masses: he knows how to make this verse beautiful and strong, and he pours his whole soul therein. There are lines in *Œdipus* that history will never forget.

> "Our priests are not what a vain people think;
> Our credulity makes all their science!"

It was the unfurling of the flag at the first gun of a first battle; it was the signal for a sixty-years' war!

The whole piece already revealed the tactics to which Voltaire was to remain faithful almost all his life, — to attack the priests while sparing the kings, to oppose the temporal power to the spiritual power. The attack here was only indirect; and it was through the priests of Jupiter that he struck the Catholic clergy; but his idea was set forth unmasked in his *Epistle to Urania*, composed from 1720 to 1721, which was for a long time circulated in manuscript before appearing under the pseudonyme of the defunct Abbé de Chaulieu. This epistle collects with much brilliancy and spirit the strongest objections to positive theology, in the name of natural and rational Deism. It is a veritable Deistic confession of faith. In ideas, it does not exceed Chaulieu and the ancient *free-thinkers;* but there is in it a life and an ardent unreservedness wholly new.

Another philosophical *début* closely followed that of Voltaire. A new combatant, five years older than the author of *Œdipus*, appeared in the arena. The latter belonged to the nobility of the robe, — a provincial magistrate, the fellow-countryman of Montaigne, by the name of Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu. If he approached Voltaire in some respects in tendencies, he differed widely from him in character. A studious and profound observer, a more nervous and concise than fluent writer, he was as calm as Voltaire was impetuous. He loved pleasure, and par-

[1] See the characteristic anecdote related by Condorcet. — *Vie de Voltaire.* At a representation of *Œdipus*, he amused himself by bearing the train of the high priest! The Marshal de Villars asked who that young man was that was trying to kill the piece.

Digitized by Google

ticipated, to a certain degree, in the manners of his times; but even love disturbed neither the equableness of his temper nor the peace of his soul: there was no vexation to him that an hour's reading would not dissipate. Benevolent to all men, but without going so far as passion for any thing or any one, he condemned evil and error, sometimes with the piercing irony of a moralist, sometimes with the serene gravity of a judge, instead of combating them, like Voltaire, with the vehemence of a personal enemy. All his intellectual and moral faculties, like the large features of his regular, fine, and strong face, presented a perfect equilibrium. Mind was the essential characteristic therein. In Voltaire, passion had as much place as mind: it may even be said that it took the first place, and that it made the mind an instrument of indefatigable activity. Voltaire scarcely comprehended that it was possible to know for the sake of knowing, to think for the sake of thinking. It was not the same with Montesquieu. Daring in the criticism of opinions and beliefs, Montesquieu professed at the same time an admiration for antiquity, and, in general, a respect for facts considered in themselves, which Voltaire by no means possessed. He was much less disposed than the latter to proclaim the superiority of the present over the past, and of the contemporary effeminacy over the virile simplicity of the ancients. More of a generalizer of facts than of ideas, though he sometimes made great inroads into the intellectual world, more of a politician than a metaphysician, yet more of a metaphysician than his contemporaries, he relished history for itself, to verify results from it *à posteriori*, and not to seek in it the proof of a theme ready made; a characteristic which was peculiar to him in the eighteenth century. In history he attached himself especially to laws, the expression of the genius of nations.

A theological question, well chosen and treated philosophically, was the first effort of his pen, about 1709. At twenty, he wrote letters affirming that the idolatry of the ancients did not deserve eternal damnation. This little work has remained unpublished. At twenty-five, he became counsellor; at twenty-seven, president of the parliament of Bordeaux. His inclination for the study of law seemed to promise a great magistrate; but there was little of importance to be done in the parliament of Bordeaux, and, moreover, Montesquieu loved the law only in books. He had neither the taste nor the talent for practice. A singular timidity rendered it almost impossible for him to speak in public: his ideas needed to be long digested, wrought over, and condensed, in order

Digitized by Google

to gush forth in his forcible sobriety; and he could never resolve to dilute them in a flow of words. He hesitated for some time concerning his true vocation; then, yielding to a tendency which was beginning to be that of the age, he turned to the natural sciences, and conceived the plan of a *Physical History of the Ancient and Modern Earth*,— a colossal and premature project, the first elements even for which did not yet exist (1718–1719). Reason caused him speedily to abandon it; but his geographical and physiological studies bore their fruits elsewhere, and stamped a characteristic imprint on the great work of his life.

Instead of a great work on cosmology, it was a novel that revealed Montesquieu to the literary world. The *Persian Letters* was printed in Holland in 1721. The form was piquant, light, animated by pictures, the freedom of which was not surpassed by the younger Crébillon. The substance was very grave, and touched on all serious things. Under the cover of two Persian travellers, who judged France and Christianity after their own fashion, the author permitted himself all kinds of liberties. It was the first book in which was outlined that alliance between critical philosophy and lax morality[1] which had hitherto appeared only in the verses of the modern Epicureans, and which Voltaire was destined to develop so largely. In the *Persian Letters*, however, the license scarcely goes below the surface: it is, so to speak, a dress rendered necessary by the taste of the Regency. There is little in it censurable in principle, except the opinion on divorce. Montesquieu considers marriage from a low standpoint; and, in his vehement reaction against the laws that prescribe indissoluble union, he seems, in some sort, to take as the rule that power of dissolving the conjugal tie which should be only an exception necessitated by human imperfection, a *necessary evil*. In another class of questions, he also emits ideas, concerning the lawfulness of suicide, incompatible with all religious law (Let. lxxvi.).

The *two Persians* pass in review, with full liberty, politics, religion, all society. "The King of France is a great magician: he persuades his subjects that a piece of paper is silver (paper-money); . . . that he cures them all by touching them (of the king's evil). . . . There is another magician stronger than he, who is not less the ruler of his mind than he himself is of that of others. This magician is called the Pope. Sometimes he

[1] It is understood, of course, that we speak only of that part of morality which refers to the relations of the sexes.

Digitized by Google

causes it to be believed that *three make but one;*[1] that the bread which is eaten is not bread, or that the wine which is drunk is not wine, etc. . . . The Pope is an old idol, to whom men burn incense through habit" (Let. xxix.).

The audacity is not less with respect to persons than to beliefs. The squabbles between the aged Louis XIV. and his young ministers and old *mistress* (Madame de Maintenon) are commented on with the most irreverent wit. After such temerity, the running fire of jests which the author pours on both the Bull *Unigenitus* and the theological disputes, and all the political, religious, and literary institutions of the kingdom, must count as trifles; but it is not so with another assertion, which crowns all his liberties: "It is impossible for the Catholic religion to endure five hundred years longer in Europe. The Protestants will become richer and more powerful, and the Catholics weaker" (Let. cxvii.). One of the reasons that he assigns for this is the celibacy of the ecclesiastics. He condemns the vows of continence, not only through moral and social reasons which exist in all times, but through a practical reason which proceeds from an erroneous opinion, — the pretended increasing depopulation of the globe: this idea arose, in him, from an insufficient study of antiquity.

He finally gives his religious conclusion with sufficient perspicuity: "The surest way to please God is to observe the laws of society and the duties of charity and humanity. As to ceremonies, there is room for great discussion; for it is necessary to choose the ceremonies of a religion from among those of two thousand" (Let. xlvi.).

In politics, he expresses much sympathy and respect for republics. He extols their superior comfort and wealth, and the liberty and equality that rule in them: he places in them the sanctuary of *honor* like that of *virtue*, which proves that he had not yet adopted the future categories of the *Spirit of Laws:* he says that monarchy always degenerates into a despotism or into a

[1] Letter xxiv. Voltaire did not fail to take up and make the most of this jest on the Trinity, which proves only one thing; namely, that the fundamental problems of theodicy and ontology had again become a sealed book to the most eminent minds, from the death of Bossuet and Leibnitz: as if the poor human intellect could never embrace at once but one side of things, and ceased to discern the world of ideas as soon as it attached itself to the study of the physical world. Another passage of the *Lettres Persanes* in opposition to the divine prescience is also very superficial. By way of compensation, there are strong arguments in favor of the eternity of the creation. — Letter cxiii.

Digitized by Google

republic (Let. lxxxix., cii., cxxii.). He thinks it absurd to investigate with so much care the origin of societies, mankind being all allied by birth. "A son is born after his father, and he attaches importance to it, — such is the origin of society" (Let. xciv.). "Vanity," he says elsewhere, "has established the unjust right of the eldest" (Let. cxix.). Here it is conscience that speaks: later, the spirit of tradition, respect for facts, would speak louder on this point than conscience. Although he cites the modern republics, Switzerland and Holland, antiquity is, above all, his ideal. He is strongly in favor of paternal authority, — he, so lax concerning marriage: he does not wish the established laws to be touched "except with a trembling hand." He blames the French for having abandoned their ancient laws (the laws of the Franks) to adopt *foreign* laws, — the Roman law and the canonical law; as if the laws of the Germans would have been more national in Gaul than the laws of the Romans. In this false historical point of view, he approaches Boulainvilliers: he sees more justly on another point of fact, when he shows, in antiquity, all the West divided into republics. He clearly perceives that it is by an abuse of words that the title of King is given to the chiefs of the Gauls and the Germans. He was, in this respect, far in advance of contemporary science. "Liberty," he says, "seems made for Europe; servitude, for Asia" (Let. cxxxi.–cxxxvi.). The theory of climates is found here in the germ.

From the tone of the book, and from certain tendencies, Montesquieu might be suspected of materialism: this is erroneous; he believed in general ideas. "Justice," he says, "is the harmony that *really* exists between two things: this harmony is always the same, whatever being it concerns, whether God, angel, or man. Justice is eternal, and does not depend on human agreements" (Let. xxxiii.). Thus the idea of justice is eternal and absolute. Whatever might be his apparent inconsistencies, metaphysician as he was only by flashes, he was spiritualistic at heart. It was fitting that it should be in the notion of justice that the future author of the *Spirit of Laws* should reveal his true philosophical faith.

The *Persian Letters* appeared in the midst of the stupefaction caused by the fall of the *System*. It was one of those moments in which men may venture on any thing. The Regency welcomed this formidable work as an amusing book, whose lively coloring, sprightly tone, and sparkling sallies, had no model in the past century. The form saved the substance. It was agreed that weapons so light could not wound: none sought to examine their

Digitized by Google

temper. No one troubled this witty president, who redeemed the temerity of his pen by the decorum of his language and conduct, while Voltaire aggravated the sins of his verse by his attitude in society, and by the petulance of his speeches. When, a few years later, Montesquieu knocked at the door of the French Academy, it sufficed, to disarm the opposition of Fleuri, for him to reject the most daring liberties of the book, concerning the *infidelity of the editors of Holland;* a resource of which Voltaire was destined to make great use in his turn, and to present to the aged cardinal an *expurgated* copy (1727). The unfortunate Abbé de Saint-Pierre had been excluded from the Academy for much less, and Voltaire was to have far more difficulty in entering it.

In the interval, Montesquieu had written a kind of mythological and amorous novel, somewhat in the affected style of Fontenelle; a style still much in fashion, and which was only to disappear altogether before the exquisite simplicity and free vein of Voltaire (*The Temple of Gnidus*, 1725). Montesquieu was not destined to repeat these concessions to the reigning frivolity. He had sold his office in 1726. He set out the following year for the purpose of travelling through Europe to observe manners and institutions elsewhere than in books, and slowly to prepare materials for a great work which already filled his thoughts. We shall meet him again. It is time to return to Voltaire, that much more active and fertile genius, the beginning only of whose career we have as yet pointed out, but who thenceforth marked each season by new creations, and whose vein was not to become exhausted for more than half a century.

After making room for himself with éclat in the domain of Corneille and Racine, Voltaire had conquered, or thought that he had conquered, an unoccupied territory in the empire of French poetry, — the epic poem. The public thought so likewise when the *Henriade* appeared, scarcely finished, from a manuscript stolen from the author, and published, without his consent, at London and Rouen (1723). Both author and public were mistaken. The genius of Voltaire and his times were the one as little epic as the other. The true epic poem is the heroic poem in which are concentrated the traditional songs of a people that has as yet no history. France had one of these poems, buried for centuries beneath innumerable imitations and transformations, which has been unearthed in our days, — the *Song of Roland*. The epic poem is also the religious poem which sums up a complete conception of human destiny in this world and in the next: such are

Digitized by Google

the works of Dante and Milton. Tasso, who collected the religious and warlike traditions of the Middle Ages, when the Middle Ages had just expired, is also epic in an inferior degrée. Voltaire is outside of all this. He simply takes the history of yesterday, political history, and adorns it, through respect for rules, with a conventional marvellousness, half Christian, half allegorical, but, above all, mortally frigid, and as uninteresting to the author as to the reader. The historical part of the poem, freed from this veneering, is judiciously conceived and boldly drawn; and it does not lack strong thoughts any more than fine verses, although there is still a little looseness and prosaicism in the general woof of the style. The true merit of the *Henriade* is in the subject. Here, no more than in tragedy or in any other work, is art the end of art to Voltaire. The apotheosis of the humane and tolerant hero, the author of the Edict of Nantes; the energetic war, brilliant to fanaticism; the incitement to princes to follow the example of Henri IV. rather than of Louis XIV., — this is the whole *Henriade*. An eloquent protest against the Revocation rises tacitly from the whole poem, in spite of the circumspection which the author has imposed on himself towards the Roman religion and the memory of Louis the Great. The bold portrait of papal Rome (canto iv.) sufficiently indicates his true thought; and, when he makes one of his personages say, —

"I make no decision between Geneva and Rome!"

we feel that he condemns both.[1]

Voltaire had attained, if not his literary aim, at least his philosophical aim. He had attained it so perfectly, that the *Henriade* remade the popularity of Henri IV., already obscured by time and the splendors of the Great Reign. Thanks to him, this popularity, justified, explained, and adopted by the new generations, survived the monarchy, and will survive all vicissitudes.

Hitherto, if Voltaire had had serious reason to complain of the government, life, in every other respect, had been happy and easy to him. Adopted and caressed by the fashionable world, whither he was attracted by the need of agitating, shining, and pleasing, he had known nothing of this society except its charms: he soon experienced its inequality and iniquity. He had chastised by biting sarcasms the impertinence of a Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot.

[1] In canto vii. he denies, although with some hesitation, the damnation of heathens and voluptuous persons.

Digitized by Google

One day, when Voltaire was dining with the Duke de Sulli, De Rohan caused him to be summoned to the street under some pretext, and beaten by his lackeys. Voltaire entreated the Duke de Sulli to aid him in obtaining satisfaction. The Duke had treated him as a friend for ten years; but the point in question was to support a plebeian against a great noble, and he refused. Voltaire challenged the Chevalier de Rohan. The chevalier joined to insolence — a vice too common among the French nobility — a vice very rare in this caste, — cowardice. Instead of fighting, he obtained a *lettre de cachet* from *Monsieur le Duc*, which sent his adversary to the Bastille.[1] He was speedily released, but with orders to quit Paris. He quitted France, and retired to England (1726).

This was a decisive epoch in his life, — his hegira in some sort. Here all that was germinating within him grew, and assumed a definitive form on many points; here he forged and tempered his weapons. England did not determine the direction of his mind, perfectly determined from his first step in life; but she furnished him all the instruments of action, except the one that set all the others at work, — his pen, so essentially French.

It would need this pen itself to express the lively and tumultuous impressions produced on the exiled poet by the aspect of this society, so different from our own. He had been very imperfectly prepared for this spectacle by his intimacy with an illustrious English outlaw, who had dwelt for some years in France, and who had just been recalled to his native country, — Lord Bolingbroke. The Tory exile spoke of his native island with the ill-humor of an unsuccessful man. It is true that English politics were not worthy of admiration at this moment, under Walpole; but the nation was nevertheless displaying a powerful intellectual and material activity, and the institutions were subsisting, although their working was perverted by corruption. The predominant features of English society, those at least which effaced all others in the eyes of Voltaire, were the application of the human mind to facts, to nature, and to perceptible phenomena; the tendency to practical utility, comfort and wealth; the respect for liberty of thought, and for individual liberty; and, lastly, the political

[1] It is said that *Monsieur le Duc* was informed, in order to persuade him to this, that Voltaire was paying court to Madame de Prie. — *Vie de Voltaire* (by Duvernet), p. 61, 1786. The great nobles were much surer of impunity under Louis XV. than under Louis XIV. — See, in the *Journal de Barbier*, t. II. pp. 18, 42, the scandalous story of the Marquis de Laigle.

Digitized by Google

and social importance of men of letters and scholars. Voltaire knew already that Locke and Newton had filled high offices since 1688, that Swift and Prior had played an important part under Queen Anne, and that Addison had just been minister under George I.; but what was his emotion when he saw the remains of Newton borne to Westminster Abbey, the royal sepulchre, by an immense procession, led by all the English aristocracy, the lord-chancellor and the ministers at the head! In France, Louis XIV. had not even granted a tomb to Descartes! . . . As to liberty, however deeply rooted social inequality might have been in England, the most powerful of the peers of the kingdom would not even have conceived of the possibility of effecting against the most obscure citizen what the Chevalier de Rohan, a personage everywhere in disrepute, had effected against the most eminent writer possessed by France. The earnest and learned polemic, that had been prolonged since the times of William III., between the Deistical or sceptical philosophers on the one hand, and the Protestant defenders of the Christian revelation on the other, attested the abolition of all preventive censorship. The adversaries of revealed religion had nothing to fear, should they exceed certain bounds, but the verdicts of the popular tribunal, the jury; verdicts seldom severe, and very rarely solicited by the public prosecution.[1]

We can neither be astonished at, nor impute as a crime to Voltaire, an admiration and sympathy very natural in a man, who, cruelly wounded by arbitrary power, suddenly found himself transported into a system of free discussion and legality. These sentiments, unhappily, were destined to carry him too far, and too often to weaken in him the spirit of nationality. He passed nearly three years in thoroughly impregnating himself with England. He studied at once, with the same ardor, the language, which he soon possessed thoroughly enough to write books in English, and the double English literature, — the ancient, that of Shakspeare and Milton,[2] sublime, inspired, and mingled with a little barbarism; and the modern, that of Addison, Pope, and Thomson, sage, correct, rich in talent, but not in genius, an imi-

[1] On England since 1688, see the admirable studies of M. Villemain: *Tableau de la littérature française au dix-huitième siècle*, part I. t. i., leç. v., vi., vii.

[2] He first revealed these two immortal geniuses to France. "Milton," he says in the *Essai sur la poésie épique*, which serves as a commentary to the *Henriade*, — "Milton does as much honor to England as the great Newton." Without rendering as full justice to Shakspeare, who shocked him on too many points, he nevertheless felt his greatness.

Digitized by Google

tation of the age of Louis XIV.: it was Boileau transported beyond the Channel, without Molière and Racine. He studied the general movement of society; the progress of commerce and the industrial arts; the sciences so energetically launched in the way of observation and experiment; the discussions of the numerous religious sects, which no longer disturbed the State since the State tolerated them all; but especially the books of the common adversaries of all the sects, — of those *free-thinkers*, who did not content themselves, like the *free-thinkers* of France, with throwing out a few eloquent or ingenious treatises, a few well-aimed verses, like light troops, but who made their attack in a solid phalanx, with huge books, by erudition and reasoning; a critical school, which was not a solitary monster, like the philosophy of Hobbes, but which proceeded naturally, if not always legitimately, from free examination, liberated from the last reservation that had been respected by the boldest of the Protestant sects, even the Socinians and the Unitarians.

Political liberty would have seemed naturally the principal care of Voltaire, so maltreated by monarchical despotism. He received, in fact, a strong bent in this direction; but the general and habitual impulse of his mind continued to tend elsewhere. His soul, so easily influenced by vanity in trifles, was, at the bottom, too spontaneous, too entire, too true in its nature, for any interest, any private resentment, to change its essential aims. It was his conviction that the essential evil to nations was less in the power of the princes than in that of the priests; that priestly *fanaticism* had given birth to the calamities of which kings had been only the instruments. To overthrow *fanaticism* by the philosophy of common sense and by the experimental sciences, which, according to him, overturn the imaginary data on which fanaticism is based, — such was, in his eyes, the greatest glory that could be given to genius, the greatest revolution that could be effected in the world. All else was only accessory, and would come in due time.

He had arrived in England with something more than a vague belief in God, grafted on scepticism: he had a system, but this had already been furnished him by England. We have spoken elsewhere[1] of the *optimism* of Leibnitz: it was a complete theory, embracing the whole essence of things, all the destinies of all beings in their series of transformations. The English Deists, Shaftesbury[2] and Bolingbroke, had appropriated this theory while

[1] See the *Age of Louis XIV.* vol. II. p. 243.

[2] The grandson of the celebrated chancellor of this name, and the author of the *Characteristics*, published in 1711.

Digitized by Google

mutilating it: they had stricken out the fundamental principles, the part relative to the development of beings in future states of existence, and the monadology, or conception of the essence of beings, as things into which man does not need to inquire, so long as his mind cannot attain certainty thereon; and had retained the external part, all that applies to the order of visible nature and the present life. Nature, according to them, is the work of a God, whose existence we are to recognize without undertaking to acquire any notion of his attributes; whom we are, in a word, to salute only as a First Cause. Nature is all that it can and ought to be: science consists solely in observing the organization of things, and drawing rules from our observation applicable to human actions. The world is the best world possible. But what of evil? — evil mixed with all things in this world. There is no evil: what we call so contributes to the universal order.

The negation of evil is admissible, on condition of connecting the invisible with the visible world by a chain which reaches from the humblest monad to God, and embracing, by bold hypotheses, the whole destinies of man before and after this life; yet difficulties still remain which we are unable to resolve. Applied only to the present life, to the order of things directly within the limits of observation, while setting aside all theodicy, all metaphysics, all conception of the soul, this doctrine is absolutely untenable; it can satisfy none but the happy of the earth, justifying their selfishness by sophistry; or young and volatile minds, plunged in the illusions of the morning of life: it shocks the good sense and instinct of man quite as much as did stoicism *formerly*, and without power, like it, to win respect by moral greatness.

Voltaire, meanwhile, the advocate of common sense and practical reason, had accepted *naturalistic optimism* from the hands of Bolingbroke. He had not accepted it forever: the justness of his mind and the humanity of his heart would afterwards react against this cold and mocking theory, and plunge him into extreme perplexity; but for the present he professed it with enthusiasm. He saw in it, above all, the justification of the Creator against the Atheists, — a *natural religion* opposed at once to the bigots and the absolute sceptics, — and closed his eyes to all else. Intoxicated with youth and life, despite his misadventures and the inconveniences of a constitution that always remained delicate, he found it so sweet to live, that he wished to persuade himself that no one was sufficiently disinherited by Nature to have a right to think otherwise.

Digitized by Google

He had, therefore, or believed that he had, a system, and proceeded to seek the proofs of it, — the positive proofs in the study of the immutable laws of the world, as they are revealed by the natural sciences; the negative proofs in the philosophy, whether critical or sensualistic, which attacked the bases of theology and metaphysics: for he aspired to make war on Descartes as well as on the Church. He saw that pure reason had not succeeded in modifying the social world; he felt that it had not satisfactorily explained the physical world; and his critical sense perceived certain gaps, species of breaches, even in the metaphysical bases of Cartesianism. In his reaction, legitimate in the beginning, but carried to a blind excess, he contested, therefore, to pure reason, not only what it had usurped, — the rash construction of the world, *à priori*, — but what lawfully belonged to it, — the methodical basis, the affirmation of the mind through itself, and of the being through thought. Two men in England furnished him what he asked, — Locke and Newton.[1] *The Principles of Natural Philosophy* inspired him with passionate admiration. Newton's magnificent explanation of the order of Nature was well adapted to captivate his lively imagination. This great hypothesis, which reduces to a single notion all the celestial movements, and which time and experience would simply confirm, made him fail to recognize that there had been something still greater in having discovered, like Descartes, not only a vast systemization of motion, but the unity itself of inorganic nature, by showing in motion the source of all the phenomena, of all the modifications of extension (light, heat, sound, and, tacitly, electricity); a progress before which Newton had recoiled in his theory of light. Voltaire made no distinction, in the physics of Descartes, between the true principle and the erroneous applications, — the result of an insufficient study of phenomena; and, rather than seek to rectify Descartes by Newton and Huyghens in physics, and by Leibnitz in metaphysics, he undertook to destroy him by Newton and Locke; thinking thus to substitute reality for visions, and experiment for arbitrary dogmatism. It was by the spirit of observation that Locke, as well as Newton, had captivated him. He summoned therefore, at once to his aid, the English Deists, Shaftesbury, Bolingbroke, Toland, Tindal, Collins, and Wollaston, to overthrow positive theology; Newton, to subvert Cartesian physics instead of rectifying them; and Locke, to overturn metaphysics

[1] See the indication of their systems in the *Age of Louis XIV.* vol. II. pp. 228, 229, 244, 246.

Digitized by Google

instead of enriching them by psychological observation, which was what he should have borrowed from Locke. He was armed now against all dogmatism.[1]

The order of banishment which rested upon Voltaire, and which the Rohans had had influence enough to cause Cardinal de Fleuri to maintain after the fall of *Monsieur le Duc*, was finally revoked at the beginning of 1729, through the intervention of the Minister of the Marine, Maurepas. The formidable exile returned, carrying in his brain the immense arsenal that was to provide for fifty years of warfare. Voltaire was replaced at London by the author of the *Persian Letters*, who, after exploring Italy, Germany, and Holland, went to study in England the movement of a mixed government and the working of public liberty.

The full mind of Voltaire overflowed like a torrent in all directions. First came the tragedy of *Brutus*, the fruit of his political impressions (1730). In this there is not only brilliancy, as in *Œdipus*, but a real tragic force, energetic sentiments expressed with eloquence, in default of poetry. The curtain falls on sublime verse that would have been acknowledged by the great Corneille,— the Corneille of the *Horaces*. In *Œdipus*, Voltaire had attacked the priests: here he valiantly attacks the kings. The expulsion of a perjured king, an antique 1688, is justified on the stage of Paris.

"He gives us back our oaths when he betrays his own."

The poet even goes beyond the constitutional doctrine of the contract, and makes his heroes deny the inviolability of kings, and proclaim the right of the people to change their laws. These bold sayings passed under cover of the toga and the Roman names. Nevertheless, the censorship bestirred itself when Voltaire would have put upon the stage, in the same spirit, the second *Brutus* after the first; and it was long forbidden to act, and even to print, the *Death of Cæsar*, an imitation of Shakspeare, greatly diluted, but still beautiful and lofty.

In the same year in which *Brutus* appeared, Voltaire aroused new hatreds by his elegy on the *Death of Mademoiselle de Lecouvreur*, that celebrated tragedian whom he had loved, and to whom

[1] See the admirable article of M. Pierre Leroux on VOLTAIRE, in the *Encyclopédie nouvelle;* and his article, BOLINGBROKE, *id.* We know of nothing so profound, with some reservations concerning the different periods of the moral life of Voltaire, which do not appear as strongly marked to us as to M. Leroux.

Digitized by Google

the clergy had refused sepulture. Voltaire, who remembered having seen the tomb of Miss Oldfield, at Westminster Abbey, among those of kings and great men, broke forth with generous indignation against the prejudice which stigmatized in France the interpreters of Corneille and Racine, and which had outraged even the remains of the great Molière.[1] The clergy expressed so much irritation, that Voltaire thought himself obliged to quit Paris, for fear of a new *lettre de cachet*. He returned with *Zaïre* (1732), and put himself under the protection of a prodigious success. More negligent in style than *Brutus*, which, nevertheless, itself retains much unevenness and prosaicism, but full of interest through the situations and characters, this drama of love strongly moved the women, and won through them the spectators that had remained almost insensible to the virile accents of *Brutus*. *Zaïre*, like the *Death of Cæsar*, proceeded from Shakspeare: *Orosmanes* was only an *Othello* reduced to the stature of the Parisian public of 1732.

A little work of mingled prose and verse was detached, meanwhile, from the current that came from England, — the *Temple of Taste*, a charming and serious piece of badinage, sparkling with the most delicate essence of the French spirit, or what may be styled the grace of good sense (1733). Voltaire here equals La Fontaine: there is as exquisite a simplicity in the elegant subtlety of the one as in the ingenuousness of the other. In an artistic point of view, it was in familiar poetry alone that Voltaire attained perfection: he realized therein the ideal of French conversation.

During these literary creations, he had prepared a work of the greatest importance, not only in extent, but in scope, and which was no longer merely the reflection, but the direct exposition, of the ideas that he had drawn from England. After two years of hesitation, the *Philosophical Letters on the English*, announced, and expected with restless curiosity, were printed clandestinely in 1734. There was reason, indeed, to hesitate before taking such a step. Men were no longer under the Regency, and there was not here, as a safeguard, the frivolous garb of the *Persian Letters*.

The *Letters on the English* rapidly and incompletely, but very vividly, pass in review the religion, politics, philosophy, and literature of England. The first four letters, on the Quakers, show

[1] To appreciate the gravity of this question, it must be remembered that sepulture, like certificates of birth and marriage, depended exclusively on the clergy.

Digitized by Google

a church without sacraments or priests, and, in the manifest opinion of the author, more Christian than any other.

In the Letters on the *parliament* and the *government*, Voltaire strongly eulogizes the mixed government, in which the power of kings has been regulated by resisting them; and proves that, in a mixed government, three powers are needed, and not two. "The English," he says, "have not paid too dearly for their liberty by their civil wars." He expresses himself very freely concerning the death of Charles I., "who was treated by his conquerors as he would have treated them if he had been successful." He replies indirectly to Boulainvilliers, the panegyrist of feudalism, by plainly treating the feudal barons as *plunderers* and *brigands*, and by showing the difference between the feudalism of the Middle Ages and the modern English aristocracy, — a governing class which is not an association of petty sovereigns, and which has preserved neither distinctions in justice, nor privileges with respect to taxation.[1] He shows that there is no real nobility in England but the peers of the kingdom, the younger sons of whom become merchants; while in France the meanest Gascon squire despises men in trade. He admirably estimates the consequences of this opposition of customs to the power and wealth of the two countries: he also sees the advantage to serious study of this parliamentary government, which forces the best minds of the nation to learn to speak and write on public affairs. It is the counterpart of the admiration of Chesterfield for the superiority of the French education in the drawing-room point of view.

In another letter, with all the warmth that humanity can inspire, he recommends the introduction into France of inoculation, which, brought from Constantinople to England, had rendered almost inoffensive the terrible malady, that, for generations, had every year killed or disfigured numberless victims in Europe. Prejudices of all kinds leagued together against this benefaction; and, for thirty years, the priests and physicians shut out inoculation from France.

Voltaire does not examine all the English philosophy: preserving a certain prudence in his audacity, he waives the direct controversy between Deism and revealed religion, and accosts only three well-chosen philosophers, — Bacon, Locke, and Newton. The

[1] The wealth of many of the English peasantry was one of the facts that had struck him most. Montesquieu, on his side, remarks that the English agriculture greatly surpassed the French. The English exported grain largely: France had not more than enough for herself.

Digitized by Google

Letter on Bacon was to set its mark on the history of philosophy. From that moment commenced the great noise made by the eighteenth century about this name, which had hitherto been scarcely heard in France.[1] Voltaire exhumes in Bacon the father of that experimental philosophy which he wishes to oppose to the philosophy of pure reason: he thus makes a tradition for his school, then passes from Bacon to Locke, from the forerunner to the Messiah. The *Letter on Locke*[2] is as bold in intention as feeble in conception. He judges the ancients and Descartes with strange superficiality, travesties the doctrine of *innate ideas*, adopts with transport the principle that all the ideas come through the senses, praises Locke most of all for having always been aided by the torch of physics, and ends by celebrating, as the height of wisdom, the doubt expressed by Locke, *whether a purely material being thinks or not;* letting it be seen that he inclines to the affirmative; that is to say, that not only matter, substance extended, in general, but bodies, that is, composites, can think.[3] The confusion of the ideas under the superficial clearness of the language, and the absence of all serious definition of terms, attest that this is not true metaphysics.[4]

The ground is better so far as Newton is concerned. Voltaire lucidly shows the superiority of the Newtonian *attraction* to the *vortices:* he brilliantly sets forth the admirable discovery of the decomposition of the prism, and the advantages of the reflecting telescope, adopted by Newton; but, at the same time, he lauds the erroneous system of the Newtonian emission in opposition to the mechanical system of undulations, outlined by Descartes, elaborated by Huyghens, and definitively demonstrated in our day.

To the *Letters on the English* is joined a long letter, the direct object of which is foreign to England, but not to the system that Voltaire has borrowed from the English: this is a refutation of the

[1] See, concerning Bacon, our *Histoire de France*, t. XII. p. 18, *et seq.*

[2] He begins by affirming that never perhaps was there a more methodical mind and more exact logician than Locke, although he was not a great mathematician: he should have said precisely the contrary. It was because Locke never could endure the *dryness of mathematical truths, which at first present nothing sensible to the mind*, that he was not a great metaphysician; that he did not distinguish the *conceivable* from the *imaginable;* and that he lost, in sensible phenomena, the science of abstract reason. — *Lettres philosophiques*, p. 120, *et seq.*; Amsterdam, 1724.

[3] See the *Age of Louis XIV.* vol. II. p. 245.

[4] A valid objection to Cartesianism is that relative to animals, — those so-called machines that have the same sentiments and perceptions as ourselves, etc.; but Leibnitz had already answered this, not by denying the soul of man, but by affirming the soul of animals.

Digitized by Google

Thoughts of Pascal. Jansenism has its turn after Cartesianism. Voltaire at war with Pascal is the conflict of good sense and erratic genius, but of a good sense devoid of an ideal, which looks neither above nor within man, and which judges nothing soundly but external life and relations. Despite all the practical reason contained in Voltaire's answers to Jansenist enthusiasm, Pascal is not thoroughly refuted; for one conception of destiny can only be refuted by another, and Voltaire interdicts himself all aspiration in this precise respect. Naturalistic optimism does not suffice against the sublime misanthrope of Port Royal. If man were limited to this earth, from which Voltaire is unwilling to depart, Pascal would be right as to the wretchedness and the incomprehensibility of human nature.[1]

But Voltaire is not only incomplete; he advances very dangerous propositions. "Man is not a simple object; he is composed of innumerable organs. To think of one's self abstracted from all natural things (phenomena) is to think of nothing at all." The negation of human personality, pure nominalism, and materialism, are herein comprised. Man *has not* a body; he *is* a body: he is not a being; he is a collection of beings, of elementary atoms; for the *organs* of which Voltaire speaks can themselves be nothing but aggregations of atoms. The *ego*, the unity that thinks, that loves, and that wills, the only thing of which, in reality, we are conscious, does not exist: the thoughts and sentiments that I believe *mine*, erroneously, since there is no such thing as *I*, are the result of the combined action of atoms temporarily associated to form the human phenomenon. This reasoning makes us giddy, and is doubtless more incomprehensible than the strangest mysteries of any positive religion; but it is, nevertheless, simply the consequence of the principles laid down by Voltaire. This consequence he did not deduce to the end: he always stopped at the impossibility of proving the immortality of the soul,[2] and the probability that the body thinks, without analyzing the definition of

[1] The replies of Voltaire, nevertheless, are sometimes profound. He well refutes the Oriental maxim, *happiness is in repose:* "Man," he says, "is born for action;" and the pretended uncertainty of human ethics, "Where shall we find the fixed point in ethics?" he refutes with this single maxim, received by all nations, *Do not unto others as ye would not have them do unto you.*"

[2] There is also confusion in this. If we admit nothing but pure reason as a principle of certainty, like the Cartesians, we cannot prove the *individuality* of the soul in opposition to Spinozism; for it is sentiment alone that assures us of our individuality: but we very clearly prove that the idea of death, that is, of the decomposition of parts, the separation of aggregates, could not be applied to the principle of thought; that this principle is a real individuality, or a simple mode, of the universal reason.

Digitized by Google

the body. Others, accepting the starting-point, would carry logic farther.

A violent tempest broke forth against the *Philosophical Letters*. The clergy caused them to be suppressed by a decree of the council: the Great Chamber of the parliament went farther, and condemned them to the flames. Judicial inquiries were entered into against the author; and the keeper of the seals, Chauvelin, obliged him again to leave Paris. Chauvelin soon permitted him to return, when he justified himself as well as he could by publishing letters addressed to the Jesuit Tournemine, his former professor at Louis-le-Grand, in which he strove to prove that he was very religious in granting to God the power of attributing the gift of thought to matter (1735). This commentary did not elucidate the question. Voltaire might have said rigorously, We do not know whether there are two or several substances, or whether there is only one; we do not know whether the physical forces are a different substance from the forces that think and love, or whether they are the same substance in an inferior degree of development: but to persist in saying that thought may be a property of that which we call matter, of that indescribable thing which appears to us extended and passive, was to assemble words that presented no idea.

There is reason for astonishment at such a fall on the part of a mind, which, in default of metaphysical depth, had so much accuracy and breadth: the true cause lies, as it seems, in the incompleteness of the definition of the two substances given by Descartes. Voltaire saw that matter, extended substance, exists, or appears to do so, everywhere and always; that thought, on the contrary, does not exist everywhere, and that, even where it does exist, it does not exist always. Thence arises his tendency to deny that *thought* has any thing substantial and necessary, and to see in it only an attribute of extended substance. He will not comprehend that, because it does not exist everywhere and always, *thought* is not therefore the more susceptible of being reduced to *extension;* and that, instead of assimilating it to this passive principle with which our mind does not conceive it to possess any thing whatever in common, it is necessary to seek above it another more general principle in harmony with it, — *activity*, *force*, to which it is reducible. It is through having paused at Locke, instead of following Leibnitz to his lofty heights, that Voltaire falls into aberrations so fatal.[1]

[1] He touches on the idea of *force*, only to plunge into new confusion. Thought, he

Digitized by Google

The publication of the *Epistle to Urania*, in which the Christian revelation was openly attacked,[1] and which appeared against the will of the author, renewed the tempest. Voltaire disavowed this piece. He thenceforth adopted a plan of conduct which was a mixture *of audacity and pliancy*, as his biographer Condorcet says; denying the too-compromising works, the manuscripts of which were stolen from him, or which he published under fictitious names; employing artifices, making concessions, withdrawing them, veering about, but always advancing. This system has caused him to be wrongly accused of lacking courage: without such tactics, he would have been speedily crushed, and his part would have become impossible. He did not lack courage;[2] but he often lacked dignity.

The hatred that pursued him, and that he was fully determined not to disarm by silence, had made him judge it necessary thenceforth to keep habitually at a distance from the place whence the *lettres de cachet* were issued, in order to have time, in case of need, to deaden the blows, or to shelter himself from them. He withdrew to the château of Cirey, in Lorraine, the house of a friend, the Marchioness du Châtelet; and did not appear again at Paris till calmer times. This tranquil and laborious sojourn at Cirey was the happiest season of his life. He lived there, in communion of mind, heart, tastes, and labors, with a woman, who, he says, "read Virgil, Pope, and algebra, like a novel;" of a firm and luminous intellect, more virile than feminine, more scientific than artistic and poetic, but with the heart of a woman and the mind of a man. It was a kind of marriage, authorized by the manners of the epoch, and the only serious and solid, if not very passionate affection that Voltaire ever entertained for a woman.

This fruitful association seemed to redouble Voltaire's activity: he pursued his course in all the paths that he had already opened, and made for himself new ones. He had only pointed out Newton to France in the *Philosophical Letters:* he wished to reveal him completely by a methodical exposition of his discoveries, and of

says, is an attribute imparted from God to matter, like *motion*. Behold, therefore, in its effect, motion become in its turn an attribute of extension, activity become an attribute of passivity!

[1] See *ante*, p. 332.

[2] He often carried it to bravado. His saying to the lieutenant of police, Hérault, is well known: "Sir," asked he of him one day, "what is done to those who forge *lettres de cachet*?" — "They are hung." — "That will do very well until those are treated in the same way who manufacture genuine ones." — Note to the second Letter to M. Falkner, joined to the second edition of Zaïre.

Digitized by Google

his system of the world, and secured the aid of a member of the Academy of Sciences who had commenced the contest against Cartesian physics before him. This was Maupertuis, a man of an ingenious, and sometimes eccentric mind, who alone might have long sustained, without much noise, the theories to which Voltaire was about to give immense renown.[1] The *Elements of Newton's Philosophy* was published in Holland in 1738. The Chancellor d'Aguesseau had refused Voltaire a license for the book. D'Aguesseau defended Cartesian physics, on account of its principle of motion directly and perpetually imparted from God; and rejected Newtonianism as irreligious, with its attraction, presented by the disciples of Newton, less religious than their master, as a property inherent to matter. It was not for the censorship to decide such questions, and Descartes would have been greatly humiliated at this kind of protection.

Voltaire was at this moment intoxicated with physics and Newtonianism. He entertained the thought of making the sciences his principal career, which did not divert him from his philosophical aim; since all philosophy ended to him in physics. He wrote papers for the Academy of Sciences (Madame du Châtelet and he competing respectively) against the celebrated Euler, on the question of *the nature and propagation of fire*. A young scholar who was one of Newton's successors in the discovery of the laws of the system of the world, Clairaut, arrested Voltaire in a path in which he would have fruitlessly wasted his powers, and forced him to comprehend, that, though he had been able brilliantly to set forth the ideas of Newton, Nature had not made him to be, in turn, an inventive genius in the scientific order. Voltaire contented himself thenceforth with drawing on his physical knowledge for arguments for his philosophy, and colors for his poetry. Among many other pieces, both serious and familiar, imprinted with the same stamp, the beautiful *Epistle to Madame du Châtelet*, on Newton, proved what a fruitful source of new images and ideas the sciences would afford to the poet.[2]

Before the *Elements of Newton's Philosophy*, Voltaire had written a treatise on metaphysics for Madame du Châtelet, which

[1] *Le Discours sur la figure des astres*, by Maupertuis, had appeared in 1732, two years before the *Lettres Philosophiques*.

[2] A strange thing, which shows to what point there were two men in him; Voltaire, in the height of his scientific passion, was already terrified at seeing the taste for the sciences gaining too much ascendency over the taste for letters, and Paris "banishing the graces for geometry."—*Corresp. générale*, 1735.

Digitized by Google

remained unpublished till his death, and which proves, still better than the *Philosophical Letters*, that he was even less fitted to become a great metaphysician than a great physicist. He would have done better to follow the tendencies of Madame du Châtelet in this respect than to impose his own on her. This noble mind understood and profoundly admired Leibnitz. Voltaire, on the contrary, plunged deeper and deeper into the inconsistencies of a bastard system that illogically associated materialism with Deism. He set forth with his usual clearness the reasons of common sense, the reasons drawn from the order of the world, in favor of the existence of God, and proclaimed free will, which is *the health of the soul:* but, at the same time, he declared that all the probabilities are against the immortality and spirituality of the soul; that goodness and moral evil are relative ideas.[1] If the soul is not a real being, if it is, as he was inclined to believe, only a term by which is designated an aggregate of affinities, how can it have free will? To be free, it is necessary *to exist.* It is true that we may go farther, and cut off the discussion at the basis: to reason, to make systems, to deny that we exist, it is necessary to exist.[2] It is difficult to imagine any thing more contrary to sentiment, to instinct, and to reason, than to unite the belief in a supreme intellect with the negation of the immortality of individual intellects and their moral responsibility. This false Deism, therefore, was not destined to a long reign, and was soon to be forced to choose between two more logical doctrines, — Atheism and true Deism.

It is just to judge Voltaire, a man of action before every thing, by his intentions rather than his formulas. His sentiments are worth much more than his ideas: his good sense and his kind heart are at strife with his dialectics. He denies the immortality of the soul through reaction against those who tyrannize over the human race by the fear of hell. He is drawn on by logic to materialize the *determinism* of Leibnitz in behalf of naturalistic optimism, and to make man a kind of machine, all the movements of which are directed by the force that has created it.[3] On the other hand, he is dismayed; he protests against fatalism; he

[1] He recurs to this point, and admits that there is an absolute and eternal justice. — See the *Philosophe ignorant.*

[2] To say that the *body* can think is only words, and not an idea. The *body* is not a being, but an assemblage of beings: which of these beings thinks? Is it a single one? Then recurs the *ego*, the monad, the soul. Is it several? is it all? — a senate of atoms holding counsel in the brain? What does this mean?

[3] See the treatises that follow the *Métaphysique; Le Philosophe ignorant; Le Principe d'action.*

Digitized by Google

eloquently lays claim to moral liberty, to virtue, in *The Dissertations on Man*, — philosophic poems, in which he reproduces in the most airy and vivid form the spirit of the *Essay on Man*, recently written by Pope under the inspiration of Bolingbroke. The character of these dissertations, published from 1734 to 1737, is generally sound and sensible, the question of optimism excepted. Voltaire attacks therein only asceticism, and not the essential principles of morality or religion.

Among the light poems that unceasingly flowed from his inexhaustible vein, more perfect in their charming negligence than the great dissertations and lofty verses, a piece of piquant tone and lax morality, the *Worldling* (1736), raised new outcries. He defended himself with as much address as grace; and this freakish apology for luxury and effeminacy should not, indeed, be taken too much in earnest. It would have been well for Voltaire's glory had he written nothing worse. But we cannot avoid calling to mind, at the same epoch, the truly indelible stain of his life. Voltaire composed that poem which can scarcely be named, the shameful masterpiece of that abolition of respect and modesty which was one of the characteristics of the times, — he called this a recreation from his serious labors! — *The Maid of Orleans*, written by the side of the woman whom he most loved and esteemed! Poor contradictory human nature!

Ariosto and Cervantes had trifled with the abstract ideal of chivalry: Voltaire trifled with something far more sacred, — the living national ideal. His only excuse is that he knew not what he did; that he was thoroughly unconscious of his work and his subject: he saw in it only a caprice, a riot of the imagination. The hatred of superstition, of mysticism, of the supernatural, of every thing that exceeded common sense, had entirely shut him out from the comprehension of this sublime story. Among the contemporary narratives concerning Jeanne Darc, known at that epoch when the essential documents were still buried in the archives, he attached himself to one alone, the most erroneous, that of Monstrelet, because it was the only one that came within the domain of good common sense.[1] But, even admitting this, why did not humanity, in default of patriotism, arrest him in the presence of the tragic end of this life, still heroic, even if no longer beatified and sacred? He was to be punished in the sight of pos-

[1] Not only in his poem, but in his history, the *Essai sur les Mœurs des Nations*, Monstrelet makes Jeanne an innkeeper's daughter, twenty-seven years old, accustomed to horses and arms.

Digitized by Google

terity by a chastisement worthy of his criminal levity, — the chastisement to which he would have been the most sensitive. It was found that he, the enemy of the Pharisees, had tortured for the second time the Pharisees' immortal victim, the greatest among all the martyrs of the Inquisition. His instinct had not led him to perceive in Jeanne what he undertook, at that time, to proclaim in Christ himself, —

"The divine enemy of the scribes and priests."

Fickle and incomprehensible creature! At the same time that he secretly polluted his Muse in this orgy, he knew how to draw from it the noblest accents for the tragic stage. The hand that outraged the liberatress of France avenged America, after three centuries, on its barbarous and fanatical destroyers (*Alzire*, 1736); or, in *Mérope* (written in 1736, and played in 1743), reproduced, in default of the antique coloring, the simplicity of the Greek ideas, and courageously banished amorous commonplaces from a plot in which the entire interest is concentrated on maternal love, — a severe drama, the success of which attested that the public was beginning to be accessible to more serious emotions.

Between *Alzire* and *Mérope*, *Mahomet* had appeared (1741), a work more brilliant than solid, and of very questionable morality. Voltaire denied in this the memory of a great man, in order to attack through him, as impostors, all founders of religions, all legislators who had sheltered their laws under ideas of divine inspiration. In the prophet of Mecca, he evidently struck the prophet of Sinai. Nevertheless, by a true masterpiece of diplomacy, he dedicated his work to the Holy Father in person, — the original and learned Benedict XIV. (Lambertini); induced him to accept *Mahomet* as the immolation of a false religion to a true one; and obtained from him, by the aid of the brothers D'Argenson, a medal which Benedict XIV. had caused to be struck with his effigy, and distributed only to his friends. The author of the *Philosophical Letters* thus shielded himself from his enemies by the *stole of the vicar of God*,[1] less strict or more careless than the censorship of Paris, which was enlightened, indeed, by private jealousy.[2]

Voltaire, aspiring to take full possession of the stage, had already attempted comedy with indifferent success: he returned to it by a work, the subject of which is worthy of mention, — *Nan-*

[1] *Mém. de d'Argenson*, p. 86.

[2] It was Crébillon, who, in the capacity of censor, refused his indorsement to the piece.

Digitized by Google

nine, a piece aimed at aristocratic prejudices (1749). But *Thalia*, as was still said in classic style, was even less favorable to him than *Melpomene*. *Comic power* is a wholly special qualification, and one of which the most brilliant and sparkling minds may be altogether devoid. Voltaire had too exclusive and too active an individuality to observe with patient care, and to transform himself into others. It is less difficult to compose dramas interesting through the situations and the animation of the action[1] than to create types of characters.

This indefatigable genius, who was unwilling for any branch of intellectual activity to escape him, had just addressed himself to another Muse, that was destined to accord him more favors and glory. He had accosted History. He wished to possess himself of human deeds, as of facts of external nature; to seek arguments in that which changes as in that which is unchangeable.

He had commenced with a narrative of wholly contemporaneous events, the *History of Charles XII.*, composed during his stay in England, and a true masterpiece of narration. He projected and wrote for Madame du Châtelet, about 1740, a book of far greater importance, one of the chief works of the eighteenth century,— the *Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations*, from Charlemagne to Louis XIII. This was the continuation and counterpart of Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History*. Since Bossuet, the sphere of history had been enlarged: India, China, and Persia had begun to be entered upon, not only by conquerors and merchants, but by observers, and men of study and science. Voltaire, in his preface, revealed the recesses of the East beyond the Judæa of Bossuet: a vaster world appeared behind the Mosaic world. The true horizon of the human race was unfolded. Voltaire had neither a science complete enough (and no one had), nor a philosophy lofty enough, to embrace this immense horizon; but he had the merit of being the first to fix his eye on it, and to show from afar its great outlines. It was chiefly through the spirit of opposition to Judaism, it must be admitted, that he admired the Upper East, without fully comprehending it. Sensualistic China, idealistic and contemplative India, spiritualistic and active Persia, all were good to him: but there was a great instinct in his confused perceptions; namely, that the essential truths are found everywhere in the tradition of the human race; that there

[1] This, in fact, is what distinguishes the tragedy of Voltaire. There is more animation, complications, stage effect, external life, than in the tragedy of the seventeenth century.

Digitized by Google

is a natural religion, and dogmas, common to all peoples. Unhappily, it was impossible for him to follow out and fructify this great idea, — him, who failed to recognize the most natural and most spontaneous of these dogmas, the immortality of the soul,[1] without which the others remain barren. His *natural religion* is a stationary abstraction, and not the universal religion, always living, immutable in its eternal object, and absolute, but progressive in the notion and sentiment that the human race possesses of this object, the soul-religion of humanity.

The critical mind of Voltaire could not comprehend the wholly synthetical spirit of the primitive world. His disdain and lack of comprehension of all internal and mysterious things made him see, in all priesthoods and all theologies, gross impostures, and lying corruptions of natural religion. By a contradiction which is explained by his opinions, combined with the requirements of his polemics, he recalls and rehabilitates the most remote past of humanity; and, at the same time, he is unjust to the heroic and religious ages, to the infancy and youth of nations: but this very injustice is the erroneous form of a true principle, — progress, perfectibility, the love of civilization. It is natural, moreover, that he should be especially unjust to Judaism and Christianity. His book is, in all points, the antithesis of that of Bossuet. The barbarism of the Jewish people inspires him with abhorrence: he sees therein the origin of all the religious frenzy that ensanguined the East; the rest wholly escapes him, — both the great character of this people, and the divine inspiration which caused Christianity to arise therefrom, and diffuse itself over the world. It is impossible to comprehend, in reading Voltaire, how the greatest event of history could have been effected, without falling back, as he does too often, on the puerile system of the production of great effects by small causes; that is, by chance. There is the same error concerning the Middle Ages: he sees in them only disorder and ignorance, and not the ideal loftiness that is manifested through this chaos. He is scarcely ever mistaken as to facts (he had read prodigiously, and had an inexhaustible memory); he is in general much better informed, more exact, and even more impartial to persons, than he is commonly represented: it is the soul of things, if we may so speak, that he disregards.

Two points merit especial attention: first, he denies the unity

[1] Massillon has a singular saying on this subject; namely, that the idea of the immortality of the soul is more universal than that of God. It is certain that it is found among savages who have not yet attained, or who have lost, the idea of the divine *unity*.

Digitized by Google

of the human race, and maintains that different races have been created for different climates.[1] This opinion, whatever may be its intrinsic value, would have been very dangerous had it been produced before the principle of philanthropy, the idea of moral fraternity, could have taken the place of the idea of physical fraternity. And again: moral fraternity can be based dogmatically only on an idealistic principle which Voltaire did not admit, — the existence of a common type in the idea of God. Secondly, he does not admit that the human race is diminishing in numbers, as Montesquieu and so many others affirm.[2] He believes that the population neither increases nor diminishes on the globe, and refutes the calculations according to which France, in conformity with an enumeration of subsidies in 1328, had thirty-six million inhabitants under Philippe of Valois.

In short, whatever may be the mistakes and omissions of the *Essay on Manners*, this book must be considered as an immense progress and an immense service: the greatness of the plan, the freedom of the execution, the frank judgment pronounced on all things and all persons, gave a new world to the human mind. For the first time among the moderns, history was something else than the annals of kings, courts, wars, and treaties. All that interests man found a place therein. Every thing that has since been done in history, every thing that has been elucidated or elaborated, every thing that has risen to those higher spheres to which Voltaire did not mount, has proceeded from him. He did not give the true philosophy of history, which the critical and sensualistic spirit could not bring forth; but he admirably traced the frame in which it was to be displayed. It must not be objected that a profound thinker had already, fifteen years before (in 1725), attempted a true philosophy of history, by systematizing the phases of the life of nations, under the title of the *New*

[1] He seems to consider the inferior races as a transition from animals to men.

[2] There is a curious paper by the Marshal de Saxe on this question, published in the appendix to his *Rêveries*. In order to remedy the pretended depopulation, he proposes that men shall only marry for five years, and shall be forbidden to re-marry the same woman if she has had no children at the expiration of this time. Maurice de Saxe is a strange philosopher. Montesquieu, in the *Esprit des Lois* (liv. xxiii.), persisting in the opinion of the *Lettres Persanes* on this subject, also desires laws, doubtless less eccentric, to encourage propagation. He would have been greatly surprised had it been foretold to him that the population of Europe would have doubled almost everywhere, and tripled in some countries, within a century, despite immense wars and revolutions. It appears true that the population of France was very large in the fourteenth century, before the English wars, and that it was a long time afterwards in attaining the same standard. — See our *Histoire de France*, t. V., *Éclaircissements*, No. 1.

Digitized by Google

Science. The book of Vico, buried at Naples, was unknown to France and Europe, and was not really made public until some time after. It had no influence among us; and, when a more comprehensive philosophy of history than that of Voltaire reacted on us from abroad, it came to us from Germany with Lessing and Herder, rather than from Italy with Vico.

The *Essay on the Manners of Nations* long remained unpublished, and did not appear until 1757: it was followed, in 1765, by an *Essay on the Philosophy of History*, which was added to it as an introduction. Voltaire very forcibly sustains in this the remote antiquity of the human race, from the long duration of centuries that must have been necessary for the first development of civilization. As to the development of religion, he shows each tribe having at first its own separate god, then the larger nations multiplying their gods by those of their neighbors, then the sages rising to the idea of an only god, which the priests, according to him, soon corrupted by the invention of systems of theology. Among many erroneous and unsound assertions, there are happy and humorous episodes: "Man is perfectible; man has always lived in society;[1] the savage state, properly called (absolute isolation), has never existed (he agrees here with Montesquieu). We have two sentiments which are the foundation of society,—commiseration and justice. God has given us a principle of universal reason, as he has given plumage to the birds, and fur to the bears" (§ v.).

We have hitherto followed the development of Voltaire's genius rather than verified its action on society. This action was constantly increasing. The works published, or represented on the stage; the unpublished works that transpired through the revelations of friends, or through fragments circulating in manuscript; what was known, what was divined, and what was expected,—all concurred in exciting the sympathy of some, the fear of others, the eager curiosity of the majority. At each journey to Paris, the powerful innovator could measure the progressive enlargement of his philosophic circle. This progress was not, however, so rapid as might be believed. Voltaire had won renown at the beginning of his career; but he won dominion only by degrees. The frivolity of minds retarded his reign far more than advanced it. The generation of the Regency had scarcely felt the need of any philosophy or theory whatsoever, and had lived in indiffer-

[1] "Politeness belongs to nature," he had said in his admirable Letter to Falkner, (*Epître dedicatoire de Zaïre*).

Digitized by Google

ence and absolute practical scepticism. Men had been unbelievers without investigation, as believers without investigation.[1] This generation was ending, and new times were about to dawn.

Voltaire experienced a great pleasure during his abode at Cirey. Newtonianism was confirmed, on a most important point, by a brilliant experiment, which he had contributed to instigate. The Academy of Sciences, agitated by the discussions which Maupertuis had excited in its midst, and which the *Philosophical Letters* of Voltaire had just rendered popular, took an heroic resolution: it resolved, with the concurrence of the minister of the marine, to verify that application of the Newtonian theory which was susceptible of immediate demonstration, — the hypothesis concerning the figure of the earth. This required nothing less than the measurement of a degree of the meridian in the polar region, and of another under the equator.[2] Never had human science undertaken any thing so colossal: it was the sublimity of geometry applied to physics. The youngest and most courageous of the French scholars shared this glorious work. Bouguer,[3] Godin, and La Condamine set out for Peru in May, 1735; Maupertuis, Clairaut, Camus, and Lemonnier set out for the north pole a year later. A twelvemonth sufficed for the latter, but at the price of great efforts and fatigue. They pushed on to Mount Kiltes, at the north of Tornea, in Lapland, more than a degree beyond the polar circle; erected their signals of triangulation on eight mountains, the summits of which they had laid bare; and operated in the most intense cold. On their return, they were near perishing, with the fruit of their labors, by shipwreck, in the Gulf of Bothnia.

The difficulties and dangers were incomparably more numerous for the American travellers. Nature and men seemed agreed to heap up obstacles in their way: on the one hand were the distrustful and fractious spirit of the Spanish authorities, and the superstitious and covetous ignorance of the Hispano-Peruvian nations; and on the other, the phenomena of a gigantic Nature, amidst which the mountains of Lapland would have scarcely seemed hills. The expedition of these heroes of science lasted

[1] See *Lettres Persanes*, let. lxxv. The men of the Regency were far from being philosophers; but they sometimes plunged into a devotion as frenzied as their libertinism had been.

[2] In 1724, Father Feuillée, who was a Minim, like Mersenne formerly, had gone to the Canaries to determine the position of the first meridian.

[3] The author of a new system for the improved construction of ships.

Digitized by Google

ten years, — as long as the siege of Troy. This need not astonish us, when we reflect that they erected signals on the summits or the declivities of thirty-nine mountains, in an area of eighty leagues, beginning a little this side, and ending three degrees beyond, the equator, from Caraburu, in the north of Quito, to Chinan, in the south of Cuença. They were forced a hundred times to repeat those ascents of lofty summits which pass for memorable events in our Alps. They were obliged to live for whole weeks on peaks which had been seen by no other living creatures than the condors, and some of which surpassed our Mont Blanc more than six thousand feet, — a height at which, under our latitude, men could not remain many hours without dying. Some of these signals, carried off by the half-civilized herdsmen, or swept away by avalanches, were reërected seven times! Two pyramids, set up at the extremities of the great base which they had measured, at last announced the close of their prodigious operations. These monuments, which should have been held in veneration by all the human race, were thrown down by the officers of the King of Spain, who saw in them an encroachment on their master's rights.

One of the indefatigable travellers, La Condamine, not yet satiated with adventures and perils, wished to pay a new tribute to science, and explored the whole course of the River Amazon; that is, crossed the whole South-American continent, the interior of which was almost unknown, and embarked for France at Brazil.

In 1750, a third voyage was made by the Abbé de La Caille to the Cape of Good Hope, for the purpose of measuring a third degree as near as possible to the south pole.[1] This experiment superabundantly confirmed the two others. The observations of French science resulted in the certainty that the earth is a spheroid, flattened at the poles, as the calculations of Newton had established. As early as 1743, Clairaut, one of the observers sent to the North, had published his *Treatise on the Figure of the Earth*, — the first work in which a French geometrician had added to the discoveries of Newton: he gave, in 1750, his *Theory of the Moon*, in which he confirmed the system of attraction, by admirable applications; then, in 1760, his *Theory of the Motion of Comets*.

[1] La Caille determined, besides, the exact position of the Cape, and that of eight or nine hundred southern stars which are invisible in our hemisphere. He observed the parallax of the moon at the Cape at the same time that Lalande observed it at Berlin, and ascertained the distance of the moon from the earth within fifty leagues.

Digitized by Google

No French scholar of the epoch deserves a more glorious name than this friend of Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet.

France, therefore, became Newtonian: she accepted every thing, — the errors with the glorious truths; and Cartesian physics were long eclipsed.

While Newton triumphed in celestial and terrestrial physics, a combination of the spirit of Newton and the spirit of Leibnitz invaded animal physics. Cartesian mechanism, modified by a few compromises, had reigned hitherto, with the great Dutch physician Boerhaave, in medical theories. Boerhaave had introduced the principle of attraction into chemistry; but he attributed every thing in the animal economy to purely physical and chemical principles, and did not attain the perception of the characteristics which distinguish the kingdom of life from the inorganic kingdom. A young man of twenty, Théophile de Bordeu, from Montpelier, resuming and blending together in a more scientific form the mystic *vitalism* of Paracelsus and Van Helmont and the more methodical *vitalism* of Stahl,[2] connected all the acts of the vital economy with a special principle, — *sensibility* (*De Sensu generice considerato*, 1742); then demonstrated, in the *Chilificationis historica* (1743), that digestion, for example, is a vital action, inexplicable by mechanical and chemical operations. From Bordeu really proceeded modern physiology, the science of organic life. The vitalistic school of Montpelier still preserved those lofty tendencies which Newton had possessed, and which most of his disciples had lost; while the mechanical doctrine, separated from Cartesian metaphysics, was swallowed up for a moment in pure materialism with La Mettrie and others.[3]

[1] *Biographie universelle*, arts. MAUPERTUIS, CLAIRAUT, BOUGUER, LA CONDAMINE, GODIN, etc. — *Essai sur les progrès des arts et de l'esprit humain sous le règne de Louis XV.* t. II. p. 6, *et seq.*; 1776.

[2] Stahl, the contemporary and fellow-countryman of Leibnitz, had combined the Cartesian principle of the inertia of matter with the hypothesis of a *spiritual* principle, — a force which gives motion to matter: this motive soul, different from the thinking soul, resembles the antique theory of two souls, *anima* and *animus*. Paracelsus and Van Helmont had supposed the existence of *archei*, divers forces which animate each of our organic apparatus.

[3] From this epoch dates the great progress of modern French surgery. An ordinance of April 23, 1743, definitively separated surgeons from barbers, and prescribed that, to be head-surgeon at Paris, it was necessary to be master of arts of some university of the kingdom. Dissecting-rooms were established, for anatomical demonstrations, at Montpelier and Paris. New means were discovered of resuscitating those asphyxiated by drowning, of stanching the bleeding of wounds, and of curing fistulas, aneurisms, and cataracts. The forceps was invented. During the last war, amputations had been much less numerous, — a proof of the progress of the healing art.

Digitized by Google

Voltaire was transported with the success of his opinions in the scientific order; but success would have been still dearer to him in another order of ideas, which trenched no longer on the mysteries of the physical world, but on the moral life of society. To secure the triumph of religious tolerance, to put an end to the acts of violence exercised by political power against dissenters, — this was the wish nearest his heart. Unhappily, facts proceeded here in an inverse direction from opinions. In proportion as there was less religion, there was more persecution. The men without faith or morals with whom the administration was filled persecuted through hypocrisy, through calculation, or even simply through routine. From the death of Fleuri, all the furies were let loose anew against the Protestants, by the Secretary of State, Saint-Florentin, — a name which history should not suffer to reap the benefit of its obscurity.[1]

Ideas, however, progressed. While the government redoubled its tyranny to the Protestants, and the Jesuits strove to arouse fanatical passions by inventing new rites and new superstitions, a singular institution was formed in an opposite spirit, which was subject, not to the direct action of Voltaire, but very evidently to his moral influence, and later to that of Rousseau. Face to face with the *Sacred Heart*, *Freemasonry* was organized. We will not investigate its true origin, its connection with the ancient master workmen, brother-pontiffs, Rosicrucians, and *compagnonnages*, or the mysterious filiation of the Templars since the proscription of their order; this would be merely the interest of curiosity, for the modern *Freemasons* drew from these traditions only insignia, and not ideas: the historical importance of Freemasonry and its essential tendencies belong entirely to the eighteenth century. It came to us from the country which we were beginning so much to imitate, — we, who had been accustomed to furnish models to others, — from the country of Bolingbroke, Newton, and Locke; but France transformed it, as she transforms whatever she imitates. Freemasonry in the preceding century had taken the form of secret political societies during the civil wars of England: in 1724, it publicly manifested at London its existence, if not its aim, in which, it would seem, there was nothing really definite. In 1725, it was introduced into France by the English Jacobites, headed by Lord Derwentwater, who was condemned to death a few years after by the judges of King George. The conquered

[1] We shall recur to the persecution which raged from 1745 to 1762.

Digitized by Google

adherents of ultramontane Catholicism and absolute monarchy were the propagators in France of an association so well fitted by its nature to shelter the principles most opposed to political and religious despotism. It was one of the contradictions of which history is full. Moreover, had not Bolingbroke been a Jacobite?

The *Masonic lodges* did not begin to increase largely at Paris until 1736. It was not until 1738 that they quitted the hands of the foreigners who had founded them, to choose as *grand master* a great French nobleman, the Duke d'Antin; then a prince of the blood, the Count de Clermont (1743). This high patronage did not preserve them from annoyance from the police. The Cardinal de Fleuri, the enemy of all innovation, closed the Masonic lodges as he had closed the *Club of the Entresol.* After the death of Fleuri, the Châtelet continued to render sentence after sentence against the Freemasons, who, nevertheless, continued to multiply, and spread from Paris to the provinces. Titles full of bombast, and fantastic rites, imitated from the antique mysteries, as if to support pretensions to a fabulous antiquity, should not cause us to disregard the gravity of the direct, and, above all, indirect efforts of the Masonic institution. The vagueness in the aim of an association which proposed at first only to "unite all nations through the love of truth and of the fine arts"[1] was precisely what constituted the strength and efficiency of Freemasonry. To associate in a common rite men of all nations and all religions was to tend to substitute the love of humanity for exclusive and malevolent[2] nationalism, and religious tolerance for fanaticism and sectarian spirit. Political and religious despotism, in excluding from every political, military, literary, or industrial body all who did not profess the religion of the State, had perfectly understood its part: the advocates of liberty also understood theirs in propagating Freemasonry.

It seemed as if Freemasonry sought to exceed the negative principle of tolerance: the Symbolic Temple, the *Great Architect of the Universe*, the appeals to the memory of certain legislators of the Upper East, and especially of that Zoroaster in whom Voltaire appeared to feel instinctively the first awakening of the genius of the West, — all these formulas indicated a tendency to affirm

[1] Letter from Ramsay to the Cardinal de Fleuri (March 20, 1737); ap. Lémontei, t. II. p. 292.

[2] The France of the eighteenth century even exceeded the aim in this respect; for it became too cosmopolitan, and not enough national.

Digitized by Google

natural religion. The successors of those *Freemasons* of former times, who constructed the exclusive Church of the Middle Ages, seemed to aspire to construct the universal temple; but these aspirations exceeded the religious scope of the eighteenth century. Freemasonry paused at a Deism without either negation or affirmation of aught exceeding a belief in God, and a spirit of tolerance, charity, and philanthropy.[1]

Despite the monstrous anomaly presented by the tyranny exercised against the Protestants, Voltaire, therefore, saw his principles widely propagated. The friends of his philosophy, or, at least, the friends of tolerance, participated in the government; and, if they were powerless to defend the unhappy Reformers, they could protect, in some measure, the most radical adversaries of Catholicism, who, being enlisted in no organized sect, slipped through the meshes of the net spread by the persecutors, owing to their very infidelity. A little address, a little reticence, and they saved, if not their works, at least their person. Voltaire had, moreover, from 1740, a support abroad more solid than that which his friends could offer him in France. For some years already, he had been cherishing with delight the hope of seeing philosophy seated on one of the thrones of Europe. The young Prince royal of Prussia had, so to speak, given himself to him with an enthusiasm which soon became reciprocal, and the memorials of which are preserved in a correspondence which fills several volumes. The literary and philosophical pupil of Voltaire shows himself therein already superior, perhaps, to his master, not indeed in the sense of things in general, but in the sense of men and public affairs in the political sense. Inferior in every other respect, and particularly in the moral sense, he had, notwithstanding, the deplorable advantage of surpassing his master in logic on a question of high importance. Voltaire believed in God, reputed the immortality of the soul more than doubtful, and maintained free-will. Frederick unequivocally denied the soul and liberty: he did not, indeed, yet carry his logic far enough; for he preserved the idea of God, as if blind fatality below did not suppose blind fatality above. It was, however, at this time that he wrote, to the great

[1] Attempts were made among the Freemasons of France to affiliate women; but the extreme laxity of the morals of the times did not permit serious or useful results to be thus obtained. It was, on the contrary, the cause of irregularities which might have morally ruined the institution, had they been extended farther. — Consult, respecting the Freemasons, *Acta latomorum; Hist. de la fondation du Grand-Orient; Hist. de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, by Clavel, etc.

Digitized by Google

delight of Voltaire, the refutation of Machiavel's *Prince;* but he refuted the theory of useful crimes only by pretending that crime cannot be useful, and by setting out from admitted interest.

The *Anti-Machiavel* was being printed secretly through the care of Voltaire, when the young author was called to the throne. An order immediately arrived to suspend the publication. The throne had instantaneously wrought its effect. There was wherewithal in this to make Voltaire, so happy at the accession of the future Marcus Aurelius, reflect in turn. Their relations, however, were not modified thereby. Frederick, if he showed himself as unscrupulous towards his neighbors and allies as a king who was not a philosopher, was faithful in other respects to his antecedents. He did enough laudable things in his administration to close the eyes of Voltaire to the rest; and, above all, he had the merit, in the sight of his friend, of being as openly sceptical as before his accession, and of setting the unheard-of example of a king living outside of all positive religion. He made great efforts to attract his *beloved master*, not to his court (for he had none), but to the castle where he lived, in the intervals of his battles, in the midst of a colony of French scholars, and men of letters, — the second French emigration to Prussia, very different from the grave and pious Protestant refugees of 1685. Frederick had revived the Academy of Berlin, formerly created by Leibnitz, and abolished by the barbarous Frederick William; and had made this academy a little infidel France, presided over by Maupertuis.

Voltaire resisted offers so seductive, through affection for *Émilie* (Madame du Châtelet); but this royal friendship greatly raised him in the sight of the French court. By one of those contrasts very common in weak and wrangling governments, at the very moment when persecution was beginning to rage on the one hand, on the other the great adversary of fanaticism was seen attaining to favor and honor. With the life of the aged Fleuri, to whom Voltaire had been antipathetic, — like every thing that savored of noise and bustle, — ended the studious and fruitful retirement of Cirey. Voltaire reappeared at Paris and Versailles. The King, the inheritor of the sentiments of Fleuri, as hostile to mental audacity as his great grandfather formerly, and as indifferent to literary renown as Louis XIV. had been sensitive to it, disliked and feared Voltaire; but Madame de Châteauroux and the Duke de Richelieu surmounted this repugnance in some degree. The D'Argensons employed *the friend of the King of Prussia* in

Digitized by Google

diplomacy, and aided him to achieve, by contracts for military stores, the acquisition of a large fortune commenced in *extraordinary transactions* and public loans. Wealth was, to the Epicurean philosopher, not an object of cupidity or avarice, or only an instrument of luxury and enjoyment, but also, and above all, a powerful means of action, influence, personal independence, and beneficence.

His favor was greatly increased by the accession of Madame de Pompadour. He had been very intimate with her when she was only Madame d'Étioles; and the new favorite, who foresaw the formation about the young Dauphin of a devout party opposed to royal mistresses, strove to captivate public opinion by the support of the most brilliant writers and innovators. She made Voltaire gentleman-in-waiting, historiographer of France, and academician, which Madame de Châteauroux had been unable to do. The philosopher purchased these advantages by deplorable concessions.[1] There was reason to fear that he would make still more. It was even pretended that the court had weakened his formidable activity by diverting his ambition and vanity towards another career. This was knowing neither the court nor Voltaire. The fate of superior men therein had been seen from the example of Chauvelin and D'Argenson. The surroundings, it must be admitted, were unhealthy for Voltaire: happily for him, he speedily relapsed into a partial disgrace. He had been able, indeed, to pay court to the mistresses of the King, and to cultivate the friendship of the corrupt nobles, such as Richelieu, who prized his faults more than his great qualities; but he could not take it upon himself to be base and servile to any one, — not even to the King. His witty and bold familiarities shocked the haughty pride of Louis XV.; and Madame de Pompadour herself, who aimed at dignity and lofty manners, found him too little respectful to suit her. She attempted to wound him through his self-love as a tragic writer by reviving the renown of the elder Crébillon in opposition to him, and ceased to admit him to the *petits appartements* of the King. Voltaire resumed his liberty, and returned to Lorraine.

A sad event speedily occurred there to disturb his life. Madame du Châtelet died in September, 1749. She was no longer any thing to him but a friend. She had even suffered herself to be drawn into the weakness of a new attachment for a young

[1] See his letter to the Jesuit La Tour, 1746, in his *Mélanges littéraires*. He professes therein esteem and affection for the Company of Jesus in order to disarm the bigots of the Academy.

Digitized by Google

man, Saint-Lambert, an indifferent poet and philosopher, who had the singular fortune to be the successful rival in love of the two greatest geniuses of the age. Nevertheless, this friendship was still the strongest tie of Voltaire's life, and was never replaced. Nothing longer retained him in France. He finally accepted Frederick's proposals, and set out for Berlin in the course of 1750. We shall meet him there again, and shall follow anew his indefatigable progress through the second period of the philosophy of the eighteenth century.

Before losing the woman for whom he had entertained affection for twenty years, Voltaire had lost a friend who was far from having held as great a place in his life, but who had left a luminous trace therein, and throughout this whole century, — that young Vauvenargues, who appeared for an instant in the midst of a selfish and frivolous generation, as the precursor of a better age. We have already mentioned elsewhere this young officer, whose delicate health was ruined by the unhappy retreat from Prague. Obliged to renounce the hopes of glory that he had founded on the military service, he strove to enter diplomacy. At the moment when, after many rebuffs, he was about to see this career open before him, the cruel malady, whose ravages Voltaire had wished to arrest by propagating *inoculation*, — the small-pox, — disfigured him, almost deprived him of sight, and planted in his breast the seeds of a fatal consumption. He resigned himself to his fate, not with the rigidity of a stoic, but with unalterable gentleness; collected the fruits of his solitary meditations; published a part of them in 1746; and died in 1747 at thirty-two, after four years of suffering, during which his chief consolation had been the friendship of Voltaire. He refused, on approaching his dying hour, to certify himself a Catholic; and his last words, touching, but imprinted with a Deistic quietism which religious philosophy might deem somewhat excessive, were, "O God! I believe that I have never offended thee. I go with the confidence of a sincere heart to throw myself again into the arms of Him who has given me life."[1]

His works, which are comprised entire in two octavo volumes,[2]

[1] *Notice sur Vauvenargues*, by Suard; ap. *Œuvres complètes de Vauvenargues*, 1823, t. I. p. 46, 18mo.

[2] *Œuvres de Vauvenargues*, new edition, preceded by the *Éloge de Vauvenargues*, crowned by the French Academy, and accompanied with notes and commentaries by D. L. Gilbert, Paris, June, 1857. This is an excellent and complete edition, enlarged by a great number of unpublished maxims and fragments, and by an admirable correspondence with the Marquis de Mirabeau (the father of the great Mirabeau) and others.

Digitized by Google

consist only of an *Introduction to the Knowledge of the Human Mind*, *Reflections*, *Maxims*, *Characteristics*, and a few moral or academical fragments. The only treatise of any extent, the *Introduction*, etc., is unfinished: the imperfect conception, the unmethodical arrangement, the sometimes inaccurate definitions, and the instances of incorrectness of style, betray the youth of the writer; but the originality of a mind that is indebted only to itself, and the constant elevation of thought, well compensate, in a moralist, for the insufficiency of metaphysical, and, above all, of classical studies. Inferior in strength to Pascal, in practical knowledge of society to La Rochefoucauld, in variety and brilliancy to La Bruyère, Vauvenargues is superior to the first in the sense of truth, to the second in moral sense, and to the third in practical utility. He is, of all, the one, the reading of whom is most useful to the soul. There are found in him neither the sublime paradoxes of a sectarian of genius, nor the misanthropy of a courtier wearied of being no longer able to be a factionist, nor the coldly brilliant observations of a critic who judges the drama of human life as a disinterested spectator. Like Pascal, it is with his heart's blood that he writes; it is himself that he analyzes, in a contemplation unknown to this epoch of external life. If he turns on his fellows the torch of investigation, this torch is that of charity, of a charity Christian in sentiment, if not in dogma. He introduces into Deistic philosophy the soul of Racine and Fénelon, those two objects of his worship; and the moral purity, the earnestness, in which Voltaire was lacking. Indulgence for human errors is in him enlightened compassion, and not complicity. Touching even in his youthful aspirations to glory, which is to him something as pure as virtue, he wears everywhere an impressive gentleness, and seems already clad in that light which surrounds virtuous souls in the Elysium described by Fénelon.

Two characteristics prevail in Vauvenargues: the first, which he has in common with Descartes and Voltaire, in opposition to Pascal, is the principle of activity, and consequently the legitimacy of the passions as the motive power of activity. We cannot behold, without anguish of heart, this glorification of an active life in a man who was condemned never to act: it is true that he had, at least, the happiness of dying young. Another characteristic, not less essential in him, and which constitutes his real individuality, is that principle of sentiment, placed above reflective reason, which he has in common with Pascal, but which he does not bury, like Pascal, in sectarian spirit. He has left one

Digitized by Google

of those sayings which never pass away, and in which he is found entire: "GREAT THOUGHTS COME FROM THE HEART." "It is the soul that forms the mind," he says again. "It is the heart, and not the mind, that rules." Elsewhere he establishes the existence of pure love, the love of the soul, capable of sacrificing *the interest of the senses*, in order not to sully its ideal. This is very far from the maxims of the society of 1740.

He does not always maintain himself at this height: he has doubts; he has excesses;[1] he falls, in ethics as in metaphysics; but he always rises again; and, from his whole work, this conclusion proceeds, — that to him moral truths are as certain as mathematical truths, and that personal interest is in no wise the sole motive power of human actions. This was, indeed, the dawn of that philosophy of sentiment which alone could regenerate the spirit of France, fallen from the philosophy of pure reason to that of sensation.

If he had lived, there is reason to believe, from all his tendencies, that the aspirations of his heart would have assumed a more decided form in his mind, and that he would have left behind him Epicurean Deism, to attain to true religious sentiment and positive faith in immortality, the object of his passionate hope. Long divided between negative philosophy and positive religion, which he never treated with the lightness of his contemporaries; writing sometimes a treatise on *Free Will* in opposition to free will, and pages in which he proposed to himself for a recompense *the approbation of men* alone, sometimes a *Meditation on Faith* in the spirit of Bossuet, — he would, according to all appearances, have settled, after these great vibrations, at an intermediate point, on that summit where the author of the *Savoyard Vicar* was about to appear. The young thinker, who spoke only with profound respect of Descartes, so much derided by Voltaire, would have probably exercised a salutary influence over the latter, and perhaps have united Voltaire and Rousseau, and averted the intestine dissensions of philosophy.[2] This blessing was not in store for us.

[1] For example, he carries too far the independence of individual sentiment, and the disdain of common opinion and general reason. We seem already listening to the American Emerson.

[2] See the fine passage in which he discerns the unity of philosophy through the different opinions of the philosophers, and that noble fragment, entitled *Plan d'un livre de philosophie* (Gilbert edit, *Œuvres posthumes et œuvres inédites*, p. 69), much more powerful than the *Introduction à la Connaissance de l'Esprit humain*. He proposes in this the refutation of scepticism; the demonstration of the accordance of truths and

Digitized by Google

It was at least to the honor of Voltaire to have so well appreciated, respected, and loved this nature, so different from his own. Never did he speak of any one as he spoke of Vauvenargues.[1] Whenever this remembrance recurs to his heart, we feel his mocking lips cease to smile, and his voice become tearful; and we seem to hear already, instead of the light and trifling accents of Voltaire, the great voice that was soon to rise from Geneva.

Between the death of Vauvenargues and the departure of Voltaire for Prussia, there had appeared one of the greatest monuments of the eighteenth century, — the *Spirit of Laws*.

Montesquieu had returned from England in 1732 to his château of La Brède, which he did not quit again except at intervals. Voltaire and he, both so well fitted for society, had early felt the necessity of abstracting from the world the best part of themselves, in order to save time, the one to act, the other to think. In 1734, Montesquieu published his *Considerations on the Causes of the Greatness and Decline of the Romans*. This was somewhat severe for the public that had so warmly greeted the *Persian Letters*. Time was needed for the *Considerations* to prove a success. It was a masterpiece of composition and style; a new language, made for new thinkers; a new language, not through neologism, but through the rejuvenation and conciseness of form, and the original saliency of expression: the author treats the French idioms like coins which have been worn out by friction, and which are freshly coined to give them new relief. Through Voltaire and him, French prose attained a kind of perfection unknown in modern languages. Except in Pascal, who has all styles, the phraseology of the seventeenth century was still a little slow of movement in the majesty of its flowing dress: in Voltaire and Montesquieu, the prose of the eighteenth century, with its robes girded up like a warrior's, flies to the end as swiftly as verse itself. More graceful and simple in Voltaire, more nervous and studied in Montesquieu, almost equally brief and abrupt in both, it is no longer the language of narrative, but of battle.

As to the philosophical value of the *Considerations*, almost every thing that is found therein is admirable; but there are some very marked exceptions. As a theory of the politics of the Romans,

customs; the selection, union, and synthesis of the truths discovered in the last centuries; and the explanation of religion and morality.

[1] "If you had been born a few years sooner, my works would have been worth more." — Letter from Voltaire to Vauvenargues, April 4, 1744. — *Œuvres posthumes*, p. 272.

Digitized by Google

the general facts of history had never been so vigorously condensed, or so brilliantly elucidated; but this was not the case with the origin of that people, the essence of its religion, and the transformations of its laws.

This had been only a diversion from a greater work, which filled twenty years of the life of Montesquieu, and which is, so to speak, Montesquieu entire in the sight of posterity. The *Spirit of Laws* appeared in 1748, — a book without a model, and worthy of its motto.[1] We shall endeavor to evolve the true characteristics of this work through the circumspection with which the writer, more cautious than in the times of the *Persian Letters*, often surrounded his idea. For this, it will suffice to concentrate the views that he intentionally dispersed.

The *Spirit of Laws* is firmly based on the profundities of metaphysics, — profundities which Voltaire never penetrates. "Laws are the necessary relations that are derived from the nature of things: and in this sense all beings have their laws; divinity has its laws; the material world has its laws; . . . man has his laws. Those who affirm that a blind fatality has produced all the effects which we see in the world have affirmed a great absurdity; for what greater absurdity could there be than a blind fatality that had produced intelligent beings? There is, therefore, a primitive reason; and laws are the relations that are found between it and different beings, and the relations of these divers beings among themselves. God is necessarily in relation with the universe as its Creator and Preserver: the laws according to which he has created it are those according to which he preserves it. Creation, which appears to be an arbitrary act, supposes rules as invariable as the fatality of atheists. Particular intelligent beings may have laws which they have made; but they also have those which they have not made. Before there were any intelligent beings, they were possible: they therefore had possible relations, and, consequently, possible laws. Before any laws had been made, relations of justice were possible. To say that there is nothing just or unjust, except what is prescribed or forbidden by positive laws, is to say, that, before a circle was drawn, all the radii were not equal."

He next explains the necessity of positive laws, for the reason, that, while the physical world invariably follows the general laws which it has received from God, intelligent beings may and do

[1] *Prolem sine matre creatam.*

Digitized by Google

transgress their own. By the positive laws that they give themselves, they recall themselves to their duties.[1]

This first chapter carries back the philosophy of law to the height from which the eighteenth century had fallen; but Montesquieu does not remain there. No man of this generation could long breathe the air of those lofty summits. Montesquieu had perhaps, besides, other reasons for descending therefrom.

It seemed as if Montesquieu, after the manner of Descartes, should deduce, from the great *à priori* that he has laid down, the principles of sovereignty, law, duty, and nationalities, and investigate the nature of the positive laws most in conformity with universal justice and human nature; then compare this ideal with the realities, and judge the latter according as they approach more or less closely to the ideal.

He does nothing of the kind. After having laid down the metaphysical principle of laws, instead of inquiring what things should be, he seeks to know how things are or have been. He confusedly mingles principles and facts, and illogically falls back from metaphysics into history. Is this philosophical insufficiency? Can it be believed that his great mind was unconscious of this lack of logic? and is it not rather prudence? Would not a rigorous deduction from the general principles of justice necessarily have led him to deny the legitimacy of contemporaneous political society? We shall revert to the conflict that was perpetually waged, in the mind of Montesquieu, between the logic of ideas and the respect for facts.

Montesquieu begins, therefore, by investigating, under the name of the *Laws of Nature*, the motives which impelled the isolated man to become the social man, without affirming that this state of isolation ever really existed; he then shows the formation of society and of positive laws, the birth of the law of nations, of political law, of civil law, and finally of government. He lays down, in this respect, fact, and not law, by saying that the *general power* may be placed in the hands of one alone, or of several. He cursorily refutes the assertion of Bossuet, that the government of one alone is the most natural, because of its resemblance to the paternal power. "The government most in conformity with Nature is that which is most in accordance with the disposition of the people for which it is established. . . . Law, in general, is human

[1] Divine laws, he says elsewhere (liv. xxvi.), are invariable, because they are enacted with the knowledge of what is best: human laws are variable, because they are enacted with the knowledge of what is good, which may be replaced by what is better.

Digitized by Google

reason. The civil and political laws of each nation should be only the special cases in which this reason is applied. . . . The laws should accord with the nature and principle of the government which is established, or which it is wished to establish, . . . the physical structure of the country, and the climate." . . .

In insisting so forcibly on necessary diversities, he does not deny unity, but he leaves it too much in the shade. He does not sufficiently prove that there are general principles to which all nations should tend, despite the difference of genius and climate.

He passes next to the various kinds of governments, and lays down the classification so celebrated, and so much discussed: 1st, The Republic; 2d, Monarchy; 3d, Despotism; the first two, limited or regulated governments (that is, founded on laws); the third, violent and lawless. To confound in a single category, under the title of Republic, the government of a few (aristocracy), and the government of the whole (democracy), — the government of privilege and that of common law, — is wholly inadmissible, although there may be intermediate degrees which lessen the distance. To separate into two categories the government of a single man who governs by laws, and that of a single man who governs without laws, appears scarcely less questionable. If no power exists commissioned to oblige the king to respect the laws, the king very nearly approaches the despot; and, on the other hand, there is scarcely any despotic state wherein some kind of law — a religious code, for instance — does not exist.

There is, nevertheless, something more than decorum here in distinguishing French monarchy from Ottoman despotism. There is a very real difference, and one which Montesquieu clearly indicates. What characterizes the monarchy, such as he defines it, is the existence of privileged bodies, of a magistracy, and, above all, of a nobility hereditary like the king, who constitute social distinctions in the State, which the king has not created, and cannot destroy.[1] "No monarchy, no nobility; no nobility, no monarch, but a despot." In a monarchy, entailed estates, privileges of the nobility, not transferable to those who are not noble[2] (the French monarchy had degener-

[1] Another characteristic of prime importance may be added, — the existence of property and civil law in monarchies. Bossuet, in the *Politique de l'Écriture sainte*, had already indicated the distinction between monarchy and despotism, but without defining it.

[2] So long as they are not ennobled; for he admits of ennoblement for money, to absorb wealthy plebeians among the nobility. Nobles should not engage in trade. — Liv. xx.

Digitized by Google

ated by derogating from this principle), a magistracy owning its posts (consequently the vendibility of office), lastly a privileged clergy, are needed, which would be, on the contrary, very dangerous in a republic. Monarchy is a society hereditarily hierarchized. Despotism is a society of equals under one master; equality in nothingness (liv. ii. chap. v.).

All this is very just and very profound. Montesquieu judges, on his side, that monarchy cannot be associated with democracy, on the elective principle, without aristocracy, as D'Argenson dreamed; that hereditary transmission can be supported only by hereditary transmission.

The chapter on the conditions of democracy has not less scope. The people, says Montesquieu, in a democracy, should do by themselves all that they can do well, and the rest by their ministers (magistrates). It is a fundamental maxim, that they should appoint these. They need, besides, a council, or senate; the members of which they should appoint themselves, or cause to be appointed by a magistrate.[1] The people are admirably fitted to choose men to intrust with a part of their authority, — generals, prætors (judicial magistrates), and ediles (municipal magistrates), — but not to transact business. It belongs to the people alone to make the laws: however, it is often necessary for the senate to be able to enact and to make a trial of a law which should become definitive only by the sanction of the people.

We must seek in other parts of the book for the complement of these maxims. This is the theory of the *direct* democracy, in which the people vote the laws in person. This theory is allied, in the author, to the axiom, that the republic is adapted only to petty States;[2] an axiom which has vaguely remained in many minds, without being fully comprehended. He rectifies it a little farther on by affirming that there may be large republics by means of a federative constitution. He has only one more step to take to recognize the possibility of great unitary republics, all the parts of which, instead of being simply allied by a federal bond,

[1] The senate, in his opinion, should be appointed for life, if it is designed to be the ruler and centre of manners, of constituted tradition: if it is designed to shape public affairs, it should be elected for a limited time.

[2] Liv. viii. ch. xvi.–xx. A monarchy, he adds, should neither be small, nor very extensive. A great empire should be despotic. He does not give the true reason for this; namely, that a great empire is founded on the violation of nationalities: it is a factitious aggregation, which can only be maintained by violence.

Digitized by Google

are united by a system of delegation or representation which concentrates and expresses in its aggregate the national life. Here antiquity no longer furnishes examples, since it knew political society only under the two forms of the tribe and the city, and not under that of great modern nationalities. Montesquieu takes this step:—

"As, in a free State, every man who is reputed to have a free soul should be governed by himself, it would be necessary for the people in a body to have the legislative power; but as this is impossible in large States, and is subject to many inconveniences in small ones, the people should do through their representatives all that they cannot do themselves. The great advantage of representatives is that they are capable of discussing affairs. The people are not at all fit for this. It is unnecessary for the representatives, who have received general instructions from those by whom they have been chosen, to receive special ones for each affair.[1] All citizens in the different districts should have the right to give their vote in the choice of a representative, except those who are in such a state of degradation that they are reputed to have no will of their own." There was a great defect in the majority of the ancient republics; namely, that the people had the right therein to resolve on active measures demanding execution; a thing of which they are utterly incapable. They should participate in the government only in the choice of their representatives, which is quite within their capacity. "Neither should the representative body be chosen to resolve on any active measures,—a thing which it would not do well; but to make laws, or to see that those which it has made are rightly executed,—a thing that it can do very well, and even that no one else can do properly."—Liv. xi. chap. vi.

This, then, is the theory of representative democracy, in its turn.

It is necessary to complete the principles laid down by Montesquieu concerning the nature of the republic by another principle, to which he attaches prime importance,—the separation of powers. "In order that power shall not be abused," he says, "arrangements must be made that one power may be checked by another. There are three kinds of power in each State,—the legislative power, the executor of matters that are within the jurisdiction of the laws of nations (or public laws), and the executor of matters within the jurisdiction of the civil law (or

[1] He admits of *imperative* mandates, therefore, only for general direction, and not for special questions.

Digitized by Google

private law); in other terms, the legislative, executive proper, and judiciary powers.[1] There is no liberty if the legislative power is joined to the executive, there is no liberty if the judicial power is not separate from both the others.[2] The power of judging should not be given to a permanent body, but should be exercised by persons taken from the masses of the people. Individual liberty should be suspended only in extreme cases, and by permission of the legislative power.

He judges these conditions indispensable to all free ogvernment.[3]

After examining the nature of the three kinds of government, he investigates their principle; that is, the motive power which causes them to act. In the *republic*, this is *virtue;* that is, the love of country and of equality. He blames those who wish to give as props to the *republic*, instead of *virtue*, manufactures, commerce, finances, riches, even luxury. Nevertheless, he speedily softens the rigor of these antique maxims, and admits that democracy may be founded on commerce, and that there may be wealthy private individuals, provided that these rich men are not idle, that the law of transmission divides fortunes proportionately, and that the too great inequality of property is remedied by the imposition of taxes on the rich, and the granting of relief to the poor.[4]

Monarchy, on its part, subsists independently of political virtue, "which is moral virtue in the sense that it proceeds with a view to the public good. In a monarchy, it is very difficult for the

[1] The *Three Essential Powers* of Montesquieu are by no means the *executive power* and the *two chambers*, — a secondary theory, of which we shall speak directly.

[2] In the greater part of the European kingdoms, he says, the first two powers are united in the hands of the king; but he leaves to his subjects the exercise of the third, which is the reason why limited but not free governments still exist there. He assimilates, on the contrary, the republic of Venice to the Turkish government, because the three powers are there united. He greatly desires here to spare the government under which he lives.

[3] Liv. xi. The political *balance*, of which so much has been said, consisted with him in a certain equilibrium between the legislative and executive powers. It may be remarked, that, to attain the end he proposes, it is not necessary that these powers should be equal: it suffices that their attributes should be distinct, and that the legislative power, while ruling the general policy of the government, should not meddle in the administration.

[4] As Montesquieu indicates, the republic, by the very fact of its existence, tends to call forth and develop the virtue that it demands by obliging the citizens to occupy themselves unceasingly with collective interests and general ideas, and by placing man in social surroundings conformed to his true nature. Education, moreover, should systematically prepare the rising generation for these. A publicist of our times, in a remarkable study on Montesquieu, has said, with reason, that the essential *virtue* of democracy, its true principle, is justice. — P. Janet, *Hist. de la Philosophie morale et politique*, t. II. p. 371, 1858.

Digitized by Google

people to be virtuous. Ambition in idleness, baseness in pride, the desire to enrich one's self without labor, aversion to truth, flattery, treason, perfidy, contempt for the duties of a citizen, . . . and perpetual ridicule of virtue, form the marked character of the majority of courtiers in all places and in all times. Now, it is very difficult for the greater part of the leaders of a State to be dishonest men, and the inferiors good men; for the former to be deceivers, and the latter to consent to be nothing but dupes."—Liv. iii. chap. v. The motive power of *monarchy* is, therefore, something else,—*honor;* "that is, the prejudication of each person and each condition, the love of preferences and distinctions,"[1] takes the place therein of virtue.[2]

As to *despotism*, it has no other motive power than *fear*.

The nature and the motive power of the different governments defined, Montesquieu proves in what manner each of these governments becomes corrupted. Democracy is corrupted, either by the loss of the spirit of equality or by extreme equality, when each one wishes to be equal to the magistrates, and the people wish to do every thing by themselves; to deliberate upon, execute, and pronounce judgment on every thing. It is not essential to true equality that every one should command, or that no one should command, but that all should obey and command their equals.

The aristocratic republic is corrupted when it becomes hereditary; that is, apparently, when hereditary transmission enters the senate and the magistracy.[3] The monarchy is corrupted when the privileges of corporations and municipalities are abolished. Despotism is corrupted by the natural development, and not by the excess of its principle, which is excess in itself.

It is in livre xi., *On the Laws that form Political Liberty*, that the famous panegyric of the English government is found, which, it has been too often pretended, absorbs the whole political philosophy of Montesquieu. He begins by distinguishing therein *the liberty of the people* from *the power of the people*, or democracy.

[1] This definition of honor is more than questionable. — See the excellent reflections on this subject in P. Janet, *ibid.* pp. 364–366, and 374–378.

[2] Liv. iv.: *That the laws on education should correspond with the principles of the government*, contains an admirable chapter on education in monarchies. He sets forth elsewhere the contrast that exists among us between religious and secular education, — a contrast which was unknown to the ancients, and which has such singular effects. This opposition could not exist in a republic.

[3] We pass by his acute and profound observations on aristocratic republics, as having little positive interest to-day. We will only remark, that he does not desire primogenitureship therein: this is suited to monarchies.

Digitized by Google

He defines political liberty as the right to do all that the laws permit,[1] which, in fact, may exist outside of pure democracy. He then lays down, as the conditions of liberty, the separation of the powers, the judgment by peers, the guarantee of individual liberty, and the representative theory that we have analyzed above.

These principles are applicable to every free State; but Montesquieu does not present them under this abstract aspect: in the beginning of livre xi., he proves that each State has a particular object; that *the delight of the prince* is the object of despotic States, and that *his glory and that of the State* are the objects of monarchies; and that there is one nation (the English) which has for its object *political liberty*. He examines the principles of the constitution of this nation. "If they are good," he says, "liberty will be reflected in them as in a mirror." The consequence of this theme thus laid down, — that is, of the general principles common to England and all other free States, — he passes to the special principles of the English constitution, — a constitution which is not comprised in any of the categories that he has defined, but which is a combination of the different governments that he styles *limited;* that is, of the aristocratic republic, the democracy, and the monarchy.[2] He systematizes them in this wise: 1st, The division of the legislature into two bodies, the one elective, and representing the people; the other noble and hereditary, and having the right of *veto* only in respect to financial matters. 2d, The attribution of the executive power to an inviolable monarch, having the right of *veto*, with responsible ministers, etc. Here, again, his sagacity must be acknowledged: the plan of the *mixed* government once admitted,[3] it is very difficult for the hereditary transmission of the monarchy to subsist without the hereditary transmission of the chamber of nobles.[4]

[1] Liberty, he says again, consists in being able to do what we ought to desire, and in not being constrained to do what we ought not to desire. — Liv. ix. chap. iii. This second definition is of much more value than the other; for we cannot be free *in doing all that the law permits*, if the law is oppressive.

[2] If it is absolutely necessary to classify this constitution, it may be comprised in the category of the republic, although it is allied to only one of the republican principles, but the first of all, — liberty. It has been, since 1688, much nearer a republic than a monarchy, as the final decision belongs, in fact, to the representative assembly.

[3] Let us add, and its existing elements: for an hereditary aristocracy could not be artificially created where it does not exist; and we are to beware of the belief, that from all nobility may arise an aristocracy.

[4] It must nevertheless be observed, that Montesquieu, whatever may be the motive for this omission, does not speak of the hereditary transmission of royalty. We will

Digitized by Google

He therefore gives the theory of the English constitution as it had never been given in England. The politicians had practised, without analyzing, this constitution, the work of time, and not of ideas: the philosophers, Locke above all, had passed it by to proceed to the pure republic.[1] The English nation, therefore, owed gratitude to Montesquieu: he had revealed it, as it were, to itself.

In the French point of view, and in the philosophical point of view, there are some reservations to be made here; but it is just to remember what objects of comparison Montesquieu had before his eyes: he was living under the government of *lettres de cachet* and revenue-farmers when he depicted this neighboring system of society, where the liberty of the pen and so many other liberties ruled; when he wrote these admirable pages, in which he gives the secret of the strength of England, of her facility in enduring the most onerous taxes during public dangers, because she knows that she will pay, how she will pay, and why she will pay; of that credit, in fine, which so closely binds the citizens to the State, and which permits England "to undertake things above her natural strength, and to employ against her enemies immense fictitious wealth, which the confidence in and the nature of her government render real."[2] He may well be excused, having no living example of *equality* or of *virtue* before him, for having cast his eyes where he at least saw *liberty*.

The great *historical* idea of Montesquieu, which a circumspection easily comprehended did not permit him clearly to set forth, but which transpires through his whole book, is that the *mixed* government existed throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, when the enfranchised Third Estate had completed the elements of the *Gothic* (German) government, — the royalty, nobility, and clergy; that this government was organized in a lasting manner only in

add, that he is fully conscious of the incompatibility of the mixed government with large standing armies in the hands of the executive power.

[1] In the *Esprit des Lois*, Montesquieu appears to believe that the English constitution will perish, in the end, through despotism: in his *Pensées posthumes*, he fears, on the contrary, that it will return to a republic, which would render England too strong, and too formidable to her neighbors.

[2] Liv. xix. ch. xxvii. With the political advantage of credit, he sees its economical objections, the danger of large debts, — a danger which is nevertheless exaggerated. — See liv. xxii. ch. xvii. It is in this same chapter that he so well points out the essential qualities of the English character, — the strong individuality, the incessant activity, and the continual exercise of reason applied to politics. He is infinitely less favorable to the English in his *Pensées détachées*, in which he shows himself so indignant at their political venality, their harshness, and their selfishness.

Digitized by Google

England; that elsewhere it degenerated into monarchy;[1] and that monarchy, by the gradual abolition of privileges, the relics of the mixed government, was tending either to despotism or to the *popular State* (liv. ii. ch. iv.).

It was soon, indeed, to pass through despotism to the republic.

If the historical and practical sympathy of Montesquieu is given to the mixed government, it must not, however, be forgotten, as is too often done, that his philosophical sympathy belongs to a higher ideal: if England has *political* liberty, she has not *virtue*, she has not *equality*. It was for want of virtue, he says, that she was unable to establish democracy in her midst in the seventeenth century (liv. iii. ch. iii.). The mixed government is, therefore, inferior in theory to the democratic republic.

We have endeavored to analyze somewhat in detail those parts of Montesquieu's work which have most agitated the world, and which philosophical and political parties have discussed for a whole century. It remains for us rapidly to indicate the opinions expressed on other points than the political constitution in this book, which touches with more or less profundity on all social questions.

With respect to *penal laws*, Montesquieu is in favor of the moderation of penalties, without expressing any doubt as to the legitimacy and necessity of capital punishment. He censures barbarous penalties and torture. The criminal laws should make each penalty conform to the special nature of the crime. The penalty for sacrilege, for instance, should be simply the privation of the advantages given by religion. He considers penal laws only in relation to social security, and not to the effect of the punishment on the mind of the criminal. He forcibly stigmatizes political espionage.

He imposes excessive duties on society. "The State owes to all its citizens a secure support, food, suitable clothing, and a mode of life which is not contrary to health."—Liv. xxiii. ch. xxix. It is needless to say that the greatness of the duties of the citizen corresponds, in his mind, to the great duties which he imposes on the State.

With respect to taxation, he pronounces himself strongly in

[1] Hence arises his exaggerated antipathy, retrogressive in some respects, to Louis XIV. The brilliant monarchy of the seventeenth century is to him only the corruption of that of the fourteenth. Hence also arises that paradox on Richelieu, whom he calls, in his *Pensées*, one of the worst citizens that France ever had.

Digitized by Google

favor of progressive taxation, as to direct and personal taxes: *necessaries* should not be subject to taxation; *conveniences* should be taxed, but less than *superfluities*. He approves of taxation on merchandise, provided that the tax is paid by the vender, and not by the purchaser, which is felt less by the public, and that the taxation is proportioned to the value of the commodities. The freer the nation, the heavier are the taxes that can be demanded from it. The system of direct collection of the taxes by the administration is far preferable to that of farming them out to individuals. (He remarks, that, in England, the excise, or tax on beverages, the customs and the postal dues, are collected directly by the government.)

The disorderly augmentation of the number of troops is also destroying all the large European States.[1] Not only are the tributes perpetually increased, but, the revenues being no longer sufficient, the capital is employed in carrying on war.

He approves of loans at interest; "a thing," he says, "naturally allowable or necessary. Money must have a price; but it should be inconsiderable. Usury (interest) must not be proscribed, but reduced to just limits."

He does not approve of the taxation of the value of merchandise by the prince or the magistrate; but he considers it right that a nation should protect its commerce against foreign competition, as the English do (liv. xx. ch. xii.). He already fears the increase of machinery, which would lessen the number of workmen (liv. xxiii. ch. xv.).

Concerning inheritances, he maintains that children do not inherit from their fathers by natural right, and that the order of inheritance is within the jurisdiction of political or civil law. Doubtless it belongs to the civil law to establish the equilibrium between the individual right to bequeath and the hereditary right of the family, to regulate and limit the transmission of property which is effected between parents and children; but to deny that any transmission whatever from parents to children is a natural right is to deny the natural solidarity of generations. Strange to say, Montesquieu does not seem to distinguish the radical difference that exists between the inheritance of functions and the inheritance of property; only he argues against the civil right of succession the confusion which the partisans of monarchical hereditary transmission seek to turn to the advantage of the political right of succession (liv. xxvi. ch. vi.).

[1] The Marshal de Saxe says the same thing. — See his notes, in the *Esprit de la Tactique*.

Digitized by Google

Montesquieu does not make the same confusion between political right and civil right as regards property; here he very clearly lays down the limits: he acknowledges that public right cannot annihilate individual right; that, for example, the State cannot take forcible possession of private property, without an indemnity (liv. xxvi. ch. xv.).

Concerning the question of the marriage of relatives, he has not all the moral elevation desirable, and grave historical errors are to be found in him: nevertheless, the conclusions are sound; the interdiction of marriage, *incest*, ends where the domestic circle ends. The domestic circle, the family group, being more extended in the primitive tribe than in modern society, the interdiction necessarily embraced more degrees of relationship.

He forcibly attacks slavery with an indignation that takes the form of bitter raillery, and demands the abolition of negro slavery through an agreement of the law of nations (liv. xv. ch. v.). To him is due the initiative of this great idea.

His renowned theory of *climates* deserves our attention for a moment: he makes these almost the only basis of the diversity of nations, laws, and manners, and does not take into account as he ought either those native diversities of races which may be modified, but neither created nor destroyed, by climate, or the power of ideas and beliefs which modify races as much as the climate itself. He has not fathomed the question of nationalities, as we perceive still better in what he says of conquests, although he has very sound and humane maxims concerning the law of war (liv. x.). The conquering heroism of the Arabs, the children of a burning soil, and the servility which frozen Russia has carried to fanaticism, seem to attest that the North is not necessarily more devoted to liberty than the South to effeminacy.[1]

He makes a very daring application of the theory of climates as regards women: he shows them naturally inferior to men in warm countries, almost their equals in temperate countries, and become morally their superiors in cold countries, inasmuch as they are strangers to the general vice of the men of the North, — drunkenness. He draws from this a kind of justification of polygamy in warm climates.[2]

[1] He foresees the objection as to Russia, and makes a very striking answer; namely, that barbarism and despotism are not natural to this Northern people, this European race, but were brought thither by Asiatics, by the Tartars. — See liv. xix.

[2] The best answer to be made is, that, in the countries where polygamy is permitted, it is scarcely any thing more than the luxury of the wealthy, and that it does not constitute the groundwork of the existence of any people.

Digitized by Google

Through the discretion in which he shrouds himself, and the sincere praises that he gives to Christianity, taken in its most general acceptation, he applies his theory not less rigorously to religion. Christianity, he says, is adapted to the limited government; Mahometanism, to the despotic government. To Christianity is due a political law and a law of nations, for which human nature cannot be too grateful. Catholicism is better suited to monarchies; Protestantism, to republics:[1] the Northern nations have embraced it on account of their spirit of independence and liberty. It is the climate that has set bounds to the Christian religion and to Mahometanism.

Although there may be profundity in a few of these observations, it may be affirmed, that, in general, what concerns religion is the weakest part of the *Spirit of Laws*. Montesquieu, the question of climates apart, in which he presents the different religions as an effect, and not a cause, considers them only in their results, in their practical utility, not in their principles: he does not go back to those religious conceptions of the laws of life according to which societies are moulded, and from which positive laws proceed. This is an immense hiatus. He, the only man of the eighteenth century who had a certain respect for traditions, had not, however, a sufficient feeling of them to appreciate what was most fundamental in the past.

He takes the question of religious liberty, like that of religion itself, solely in the point of view of the social interest: he does not wish a new religion to be received into a State, because it would be a cause of discord; but, when it is once established there, he desires that it should be tolerated, and that penal laws should be avoided in religious matters, because they do not attain their end. He quits this cold reasoning, however, when the Inquisition is in question, in an impulse of lofty and generous indignation.

The *Spirit of Laws* ends with a purely historical exposition of the revolutions of civil law and feudal law in France. The author supports Boulainvilliers in opposition to Dubos as to the Frankish conquest and the Frankish origin of the nobility:[2]

[1] It is curious to compare this with the prediction of the *Lettres Persanes;* see *ante*, p. 335.

[2] See *ante*, p. 322. His sympathetic attention to every thing that concerned the Franks made him see clearly into the nature of the famous *Salic Law*, the object of so much discussion before and after him. — See liv. xviii. ch. xxii. There is little to add to what he has said of it.

Digitized by Google

altogether lawyer and Southerner as he is, he shows himself much more Frank and German than Roman in sentiment and tradition. The spirit of the nobility rules in this last part of his work; his mind delights in the multifold life of the Middle Ages; the spirit of modern unity astonishes and repels him; he chafes at the increasing tendency to uniformity of laws: to make a general law of all special local laws, would be, in his opinion, "an inconsiderate thing." This genius, so innovating, here falls back entirely upon the past.

Both friends and adversaries have often judged Montesquieu wholly by this portion of his work and the chapters relating to the English constitution. The analysis that we have given of his opinions as a whole will show whether these judgments are well founded. There were two men in Montesquieu, two different spirits, which he never succeeded in harmonizing: herein is the secret of his contradictions. The French spirit and the English spirit, the philosophical spirit which judges facts according to the ideas of reason and conscience, and the traditional spirit which submits to and explains facts instead of judging them, and which seeks its ideal in the past, struggled unceasingly in him. He fluctuated between the reality of England, free in inequality, and the ideal of the democratic republic;[1] he went to the farthest bounds of inconsistency: the man of tradition constituted entailment in the family; the man of ideas went so far as to deny that there is any natural right in inheritance. Except the partisans of pure political and religious despotism, all parties for a century past, democrats and aristocrats, republicans and constitutional monarchists, conservatives of the so-called historical school, and socialists, have proceeded from Montesquieu; but the republicans have too often forgotten what they owed him, and have too easily yielded him to their adversaries: he was worth the trouble of dispute, and a great part of his soul belonged to them.[2]

We may sum up Montesquieu by saying that he was the exponent of political liberty, as Voltaire was the exponent of tolerance, of the liberty of thought. It has been observed with reason, that

[1] He has a lively presentiment of the United States. — See what he writes concerning Penn, liv. iv. ch. vi.

[2] With respect to the study of the great work which has agitated, if not resolved, all the questions relative to law, we should cite, as expressing the most advanced point which the theory seems to us to have reached at the present time, the article *Droit* of the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, by M. Théodore Fabas.

Digitized by Google

the order of subjects often appears arbitrary in the *Spirit of Laws;* that the method leaves much to be desired; that the positive knowledge of the author is not on a level with the subject; that he does not know all that might have been known in his times; and that he does not always exercise the necessary discrimination in the choice of his documents. Among the contemporaries of Montesquieu, many paused at the shell, at the sallies, the sprightly turn of thought, and believed that there was nothing but wit in that book in which there was so much wit; but the man who studies Montesquieu seriously, is appalled, as it were, at the infinite variety of rapid perception, and the immense power of reflection and concentration, demanded by such an enterprise. It will be comprehended, that, exhausted on reaching the end, he declared that he *would work no more*. He had time to see the prodigious success of his book, signalized in the space of eighteen months by twenty-two French editions, and numerous translations into different languages; but he did not long survive it: he died, at a comparatively early age, February 10, 1755. He repulsed the importunities of the Jesuits who besieged his dying bed to wring from him retractions, and answered them only by these words: "I have always respected religion: the morality of the Gospel is the best gift that God could have made to mankind." He received the viaticum from the hands of the curé. "You understand," said the priest, "how great is God."—"Yes, and how small are men!" he replied; then peacefully closed his eyes.

He left a few opuscules, an *Essay on Taste*, and *Divers Thoughts*. We meet in these lofty, ingenious, and sometimes paradoxical views, judgments more than questionable, particularly concerning poetry and the fine arts, and bold strokes that reveal the groundwork of his belief on important points. The principles therein present some contradictions on the subject of psychology: however, he shows himself unequivocally spiritualistic. He finds, he says, in metaphysical ideas, apart from revealed ideas, if not an entire certainty, at least a very great hope, of immortality; and he protests, with a sort of generous pride, against those who accept entire annihilation. We give a few other characteristic passages: "God is like a monarch who has several nations under his dominion. All come to bring him tribute, and each speaks a different tongue,— the different religions. Ecclesiastics; flatterers of princes, when they cannot be their tyrants. They are interested in keeping the people in ignorance; otherwise, the Gospel being simple, the latter would say, 'We know

Digitized by Google

all this as well as you.' Three things are incredible among the things that are incredible,—the pure mechanism of animals, passive obedience, and the infallibility of the Pope."

The definitive religious opinions of Montesquieu appear, therefore, to be summed up in this wise: God, the immortality of the soul, the Gospel as the moral law, hostility to the Papacy and the Roman Church, and perhaps to all positive theology, which seems indicated by his bitter speeches against the priests. It is important to verify this; for what was only indicated in him was about to be developed by another on a large scale, and with an immense power of sentiment. The religion of Montesquieu, with its superiority over that of Voltaire, and also with its hiatuses, was to be the religion of Rousseau, who, in politics, was to be likewise the successor to Montesquieu, and to develop his republican tendency, while setting aside the opposite tendency.[2]

Montesquieu disappeared in the midst of an extraordinary movement of minds, which he encouraged with his last looks, but which he would certainly have wished to modify and temper. The progress of the natural sciences, bursting forth with an unexampled glory, was intoxicating intellects, and raising up an enthusiastic *naturalism*, which differed essentially from the cold incredulity of the first half of the century, but which joined ancient scepticism and vulgar logic with blind impetuosity in carrying sensualistic philosophy to its farthest consequences, arrested for some time by the practical good sense of Voltaire. At the same time that philosophy penetrated the secrets and celebrated the magnificence of the physical world, it was shaking all the foundations of the moral world. Minds were drifting towards chaos. The human conscience then protested. The philosophy of sentiment set itself up in opposition to that of sensation. Montesquieu would have applauded sentiment in the name of reason! The soul of France was about to be disputed in giant struggles, no longer between the innovators and the past,—in favor of which no powerful voice protested,—but among the innovators themselves; as if the ancient order had already disappeared, and nothing longer was in question but to dispute its inheritance. A host of new athletes filled the arena: Buffon was already resplendent, like the king of beasts in the midst of Nature; Diderot, D'Alembert, Helvetius, were urging forward the tumultuous league of the

[1] He would develop it, but would compromise it by assigning too much to unity, and not enough to liberty.

[2] See the *Pensées*, in t. VII. of the *Œuvres complètes*, 8vo, 1819.

Digitized by Google

Encyclopædia; Rousseau was rising, alone against all the others. The sphere of facts was beginning to tremble at the noise of the tempest that was overthrowing the sphere of ideas; and the observers who coolly examined the movement of things foresaw the formidable era that was about to be born. "All that might be has not yet been thought," wrote the aged Fontenelle in 1743:[1] "the vast future has events in store for us which we would not believe to-day, could any one predict them." Before the end of this century, ten years after, Chesterfield wrote, "The trade of both king and priest will not be half so good a one as it has been. All the symptoms which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and revolutions in government, now exist, and daily increase, in France."[2]

[1] In the preface of an edition of his Comedies. Duclos also gives remarkable prognostications.

[2] *Letters* of April 13, 1752; and December 25, 1753.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

LOUIS XV. (CONTINUED).

FRANCE AND HER COLONIES. — Manufactures and Commerce. Reign of Madame de Pompadour. The *Parc-aux-Cerfs*. Machault attempts to reform the Finances. He is thwarted by the Resistance of the Privileged Classes. Quarrels of the Parliament with the Clergy and the Court. War of the *Certificates of Confession*. Secret Diplomacy of Louis XV. Progress and Conquests of Dupleix and Bussi in India. The whole Deccan under the Rule of France. Greatness of the Plans of Dupleix. He attempts to secure India to France. He is disavowed and recalled through Deference to England. Hostilities between the French and English Colonists of the American Continent. Respective Situations of Canada and British America. The English attack Canada, and capture our Merchantmen without a Declaration of War. Pusillanimity of the Cabinet of Versailles. Long and Useless Negotiations. Opening of the Seven-Years' War.

1748–1756.

AFTER the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, France, with that vitality which is characteristic of her, speedily revived, at least so far as regarded the things most apparent, — as the large towns, the manufacture of superfluities, foreign commerce, the ports and *the isles* (as our flourishing West-India Islands were preëminently styled). It was this that permitted Voltaire so much to extol the years that followed 1748.[1] After so many mistakes and reverses, imputable almost solely to the government, there remained to France more brilliant opportunities than ever to found a colonial empire, had she known how to profit by the lessons of the past, and to reorganize a navy, so deeply had the maritime and colonial genius taken root among the nation.[2]

[1] "All Europe saw few better days than from the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle to about 1755. Commerce flourished from St. Petersburg to Cadiz; the fine arts were everywhere in honor; a mutual correspondence was seen between all nations; Europe resembled a great family reunited after its differences." — *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. xxxi.

[2] In 1750, some rich merchants established at Paris a marine insurance company, with a capital of twelve millions, in order that French commerce might no longer address itself to foreign companies. This was the revival of an institution of Colbert's times. — See the *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. II. p. 349; London, 1781.

Digitized by Google

Within, the situation of manufactures was not so good. Here it was necessary to make many innovations, yet less to make than to unmake; that is, to relax the bonds on labor, — those leading-strings, formerly salutary, which had become fetters. The English manufactures were developing under a system of industrial liberty; and the application of mechanics to manufactures was beginning to enter upon that wondrous career in which it has never been arrested. The French manufactures, for the most part, remained stationary under the empire of unvarying regulations. The organization of masterships and wardenships (of trade corporations) kept merchandise and manufactured articles at a high price, which rendered them inaccessible to the peasants, who were compelled to clothe themselves only in the coarsest stuffs. The manufacturer oppressed the peasant indirectly, and the apprentice directly, to the common detriment of agriculture, and the true interest of manufactures, which should aim at cheapness and abundance. The manufacturers were oppressed, in their turn, without being really conscious of it, by those statutes which routine made them consider a protection. While Madame de Pompadour and the women of fashion introduced into the elegant world the English *India muslins* and other foreign novelties, the manufacturers of costly stuffs were seen "waiting sadly, by their slackened looms, for a return of ancient fashions and ancient manners to reawaken a demand for their rich and heavy products."[1] The results were the same in the manufacture of cloths. "The regulations seemed to require each one to restrict himself to the exclusive service of a certain class of consumers. The corporations had exclusive rights against each other; and had any one invented a great plan of manufacture, that would have economically embraced all the operations and accessories which effect and accompany the successive transformations of the material, he would have found himself encroaching upon twenty State corporations. He could not have shown his machines, and carried his processes to perfection, without having to undergo twenty suits."[1][2]

This torpor, however, was not universal. In a few of our towns, the manufacturers had been wise enough to cling to the spirit rather than the letter of Colbert's system. The inventive spirit of the

[1] Vincens, *Journal des Économistes*, t. II. p. 2. This quotation is especially applicable to a somewhat later period. The richness of costume did not begin to diminish until a few years after the middle of the century.

[2] Vincens, *ibid.*

Digitized by Google

people of Lyons, for instance, eluded the fetters of the regulations, and daily increased the renown of their tissues. At Nîmes, about 1750, the manufacturers obtained the favor, by tacit tolerance, of throwing off their regulations. They thenceforth invented elegant tissues of pure or mixed silks for the use of classes in moderate circumstances, lowered their prices, and modified their manufactures according to the needs and the changes of taste.[1] Certain northern towns entered upon the same course with respect to light fabrics of thread (lawns and linens).

It was not enough to tolerate, it was necessary to instigate, improvements, and to facilitate them by modifying the industrial statutes. The government did nothing of the kind, and could find no better course to counterbalance the progress of England than to enter upon the purely prohibitory system, — a system always powerless abroad, and always pernicious at home.

Agriculture, still sacrificed, tended, however, to improve at certain points of France, owing to the efforts of a few enlightened land-owners and a few well-meaning administrators. The movement of ideas began to be directed towards this vital interest; but nothing of importance could be done in favor of the rural districts, so long as the fiscal system subsisted.

One man in the ministry was fully disposed to reform the fiscal system: we shall directly see the result of his endeavors. Meanwhile there is room for mention of some institutions of a different kind, founded by the government during the period that occupies us. 1st, A new branch of luxury, the manufacture of porcelain at Vincennes, transferred, a few years after, to Sèvres (1748), — a brilliant invention, which freed France from the tribute that she was paying to Saxony;[2] 2d, A useful institution for the superintendence and maintenance of national intercourse, the bureau, then the school, of bridges and highways (1751); 3d, A great establishment, suggested to the minister of war (the Count d'Argenson) by the aged Pâris Duvernei, — the military school (January, 1751), designed to instruct, at the expense of the State, five hundred young noblemen without fortune, and to fit them for service. The royal ordinance exacted four generations at least of nobility on the father's side. Another recent ordinance (November, 1750) had inadequately compensated in advance for this measure of aristocratic exclusiveness. Formerly the noble and the warrior were one: the military rank conferred nobility in it-

[1] Vincens, *ibid.*, and *Revue de Législation et de Jurisprudence*, t. XVII. p. 72.
[2] *Journal du règne de Louis XV.* t. II. p. 56.

Digitized by Google

self. This had long since ceased; and nothing was more shocking than to see a revenue-farmer, or a usurer, acquire the privileges of nobility with the money of which he had robbed the people; while a brave officer, poor, and covered with wounds, was subjected to the villain-tax as a *roturier*. The Count d'Argenson only partially put an end to these strange contrasts. He caused it to be decided that officers in active service should be exempt from the villain-tax; that retired officers, who had served twenty years in the rank of captain, should be exempted for life; and that general officers and their posterity should be nobles by law.[1]

Moreover, the modifications that might be introduced into the order of the nobility were not long to be of importance, as the elder D'Argenson had truly foreseen.[2] There were things which it was more essential to do, and which, unfortunately, were not done while peace gave the leisure for it; namely, to make our army acquainted with the progress of the military art, and to initiate it into the new Prussian tactics. A feeble desire to do this was manifested; but no one knew how to set to work, so ignorant were the general officers of their vocation. Narrow and unmethodical attempts were made at the Invalides and in the camps of the peace establishment. The Marshal de Saxe had just died (November 30, 1750) with his head full of projects of reform, and had borne away with him all the science of warfare that remained to us. It is evident, by a letter from Maurice de Saxe to the minister of war, that he foresaw the consequences of the lack of discipline and ignorance into which the army had fallen; but, as he had not fathomed the Prussian system, he does not indicate any remedy in this letter for the evil clearly pointed out. He would probably have found this remedy, that is, have stolen the secret of Frederick II., had not a premature end, the effect of his excesses, snatched him from France.[3]

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. pp. 238, 242.

[2] See *ante*, p. 326.

[3] See the *Éloge de Frédéric le Grand*, by M. de Guibert. In his letter to the Count d'Argenson, Maurice declares that the French army was destined to avoid pitched battles and manœuvres, and to strive to confine themselves to sudden attacks and skirmishes. He was only too good a prophet. His military works, *Rêveries*, *Notes*, etc., published in 1757, are a most interesting study. He wishes to render the equipments of the soldiery more healthful and more convenient; to cause the heavy cavalry to resume defensive armor and the lance; to cause the infantry to use the cadence step like the Prussians; to decide attacks by the bayonet, and not by firing; to establish a school for staff-officers; to cause the higher grades to be given, no longer by seniority, but by merit; to have machines always ready for the defence of the harbors, with which intrenchments could be formed instantaneously under water, at the entrance of the

Digitized by Google

The eminent generals disappeared with Maurice de Saxe and Lowendahl, who survived his companion in arms only a short time (he died in March, 1755). The statesmen had been expelled from power in the persons of Chauvelin and the elder D'Argenson: there remained in the ministry two men of talent, but without general views, — Machault and the younger D'Argenson. The government was constantly sinking into deeper degradation under the sway of Madame de Pompadour. The impaired health of the favorite, from 1752, gradually produced a change in her relations with the King, which seemed destined to sweep away her fortunes: nothing of the kind occurred. She had secured by the resources of her mind the empire that she had won by her face: the art of amusing the most listless of men,[1] and the omnipotence of habit, rendered her dominion impregnable. The mistress transformed herself into a necessary friend, a constant counsellor at all hours, a prime minister in point of fact. She had caused the honors reserved to duchesses to be given her (the tabouret in 1752); she imposed herself on poor Maria Leczinska as lady of the bed-chamber to the Queen (in 1756); she claimed the right to exact in her house from the great nobles, and even from the princes of the blood, the marks of deference formerly accorded to Madame de Maintenon; and the greater part were base enough to submit. The *friend of the King* played a double part: in public, she simulated virtue, and caused the *present* innocence of her relations with Louis XV. to be loudly sounded. She even offered to return to her husband;

ports, in order to stop the vessels and fire-ships; and to create a light infantry closely analogous to our *Vincennes chasseurs*. Anxious to protect the life and health of the soldiers, he regrets the defensive armor of former times. He blends sentiments of humanity with his vices. He strives to put an end to the cruel custom of burning the suburbs of threatened towns, and to put spies in irons instead of hanging them. He philosophizes sometimes more seriously than in that strange *Mémoire sur la Population* of which we have spoken elsewhere. "What a spectacle do nations present to us to-day! We see a few wealthy, indolent, and voluptuous men, who secure their happiness at the expense of the multitude, . . . that can only exist by unceasingly preparing for them new pleasures. This assemblage of oppressors and oppressed form what is called society; and this society collects its vilest and most contemptible elements, and makes them its soldiers. It was not with such manners, or with such arms, that the Romans conquered the universe." It is not Montesquieu, it is not Rousseau, that speaks thus: it is Maurice de Saxe in his *Rêveries!* Maurice wishes every Frenchman to be a soldier for five years, without exception. It is seen, by his reflections, that duels were still frequent in the army, and that capital punishment for this offence existed only on paper. The duel was reputed a fortuitous encounter, or else the leaders of the corps aided the duellists to escape. A chronicle of 1742 relates that the Cardinal de Fleuri himself advised his nephew to fight with an officer of his regiment that had provoked him. — *Revue rétrospective*, t. IV. p. 444.

[1] From this period dates the playhouse of Versailles (1748).

Digitized by Google

secretly warning him, meanwhile, to beware of accepting the offer. In private, she was not, as has been said, the superintendent, but the confidante, of the new pleasures of the King. It was, above all, important to her to prevent Louis from attaching himself to any lady of the court who might gain a lasting ascendency over him: it suited her interests for the King to carry on his plebeian amours among ignorant young girls, children, devoid of intrigue and art. The increasing depravity of Louis agreed but too well with the views of the favorite; ordinary debauchery no longer satisfied his palled senses, unless he blighted innocence: he had fallen so low, that he would have disgusted the Regent.

Louis had at first received his obscure mistresses sometimes in a little suite of rooms in the turrets of the château, near the chapel; sometimes in a small house in the Avenue de Saint-Cloud: the charming residence of Madame de Pompadour, called the Hermitage,[1] the gardens of which had been taken from the park of Versailles, also served him as an asylum in case of need. Finally, in 1755, Louis purchased secretly, through a third party, a house hidden between two blind alleys, in an obscure corner of the quarter of the Parc-aux-Cerfs at Versailles.[2] "This was the origin of an establishment so infamous," says a historian,[3] "that, after having depicted the excesses of the Regency, we know not even how to name this kind of debauchery. . . . Young girls were conducted thither, who had been sold by their parents, or *wrested from them*. . . . Corruption entered the most peaceful households, the most obscure families. It was planned skilfully and long in advance by those who pandered to the debauches of Louis: years were employed in seducing children who were not yet nubile, and in combating in young girls the principles of modesty and fidelity. . . . "One day, a charming little Irish girl of twelve, the daughter of a poor Jacobite refugee, served as a model for a head of the Virgin to a painter commissioned to decorate the apartments of the Queen. Shortly after, the Marquis de Lugeac, the nephew of Madame de Pompadour, and Lebel, the King's *valet-de-chambre*, informed the mother of the child that her daughter had pleased one of the ladies of the Queen, who had no children, and who wished to take her and provide for her future. The mother

[1] Now the *Hôtel des Réservoirs*.

[2] Now the Quartier Saint-Louis, Rue Saint-Médéric. — See *Histoire anecdotique des rues de Versailles*, by M. Le Roi, municipal librarian of Versailles, — a very curious publication.

[3] Lacretelle, *Histoire de France pendant le dix-huitième siècle*, t. III. p. 172.

Digitized by Google

and daughter were carried to the house of the lady; then were separated under some pretext. When the mother returned, she found neither the pretended lady of the Queen nor her daughter. She never saw her again. The child had been conducted to a paviljon of the Tuileries, which was, it is said, for many years the provisional dépot of the young victims abducted in Paris by the purveyor Lebel. The child was sent from the Tuileries to the turrets of Versailles. Another time, the King, having come to Paris with his retinue for a bed of justice, perceived on the terrace of the Tuileries a young girl of from twelve to thirteen, whose extreme beauty struck him. Lebel easily succeeded in finding her again. This time, things passed amicably. The father and mother (the father was a chevalier of St. Louis, by the name of De Romans) accepted the proposals of the King for their daughter's future! When the child was fifteen, she was taken to Versailles as if to visit the château: her parents delivered her to Lebel under some pretext, and the latter conducted the innocent creature to the *petits appartements*, where the King was awaiting her!

These facts multiplied: the King had by all these young girls a great number of children, that were almost always taken from their mothers immediately after their birth, in order to prevent them from being made means of influence, and to stifle scandal. Touching anecdotes are related of the efforts of these young mothers to find their children; among others, of the young Irish girl, who recovered her daughter by dint of address and perseverance, and was again barbarously separated from her. At the Parc-aux-Cerfs, where neither the Irish girl nor Mademoiselle de Romans had been, it was endeavored to conceal the name of the master of the house from the young *boarders:* one of them having discovered it, and made a scandal, she was sent to a madhouse.

A last trait must be added to depict Louis XV. His vices had a strange character: they were the vices, not of the eighteenth century, but of the Middle Ages. Superstition was united in him, as in Henri III., to the most abject libertinism. He had a slavish fear of piety. He mingled the exercises of religious worship with his infamous deeds; he dictated morning and evening prayers to the poor little creatures that he polluted, and prayed with them![1] . . .

[1] See *Journal de Barbier*, t. III. p. 453; Soulavie, *Anecdotes de la cour de France pendant la faveur de madame de Pompadour*, c. iii.–v.; *Mémoires de madame du Hausset*,

Digitized by Google

The great nobles imitated the King in his base seductions or his cowardly acts of violence, sure as they were of impunity, provided that they addressed themselves to families poor, and without supporters. These horrors could not remain wholly secret. The cry of the mothers mounted to heaven. The rumbling of smothered thunder was heard amidst the people. A few years had sufficed to work a prodigious change in the sentiments of Paris. A proof of this had been given as early as 1750, only six years after that day of delirious joy when Paris had decreed to Louis XV. the title of the *Well-beloved*. The ministry having ordered the police to gather up the abandoned children, the little vagrants, in order to send them as colonists to the Mississippi, the exempts took advantage of this order, given with cruel thoughtlessness, to abduct the children of the bourgeois and artisans in order to oblige the parents to redeem them. A first riot broke out, May 16, 1750: the whole quarter of Saint-Antoine fell upon the exempts and archers. Suddenly the rumor spread among the multitude that the King had become leprous in consequence of his debauchery, that baths of human blood were required to cure him, and that it was for this that the children were taken. On the 22d and 23d, the excitement broke out afresh with much greater violence: several archers were put to death by the people; many of the houses of the police officers were sacked; a commissioner of the police was obliged to give up a spy that had taken refuge in his house, and whose dead body the people flung before the door of the lieutenant-general of police, Berryer. The lieutenant of police fled. Madame de Pompadour, who had come by chance to Paris, had only time to flee at the full speed of her horses. The people talked of going *to burn Versailles*.[1]

waiting-maid of Madame de Pompadour, ap. *Bibliothèque des Mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France pendant le dix-huitième siècle*, t. III. pp. 78–82. Madame du Hausset, in seeking to extenuate the facts, says enough to confirm rather than contradict Soulavie. — *Mémoires de madame Campan*, t. III. pp. 29–45. We have set aside the anecdote of Mademoiselle Tiercelin, related by Soulavie, on the suspicion that it may be the same as that of Mademoiselle de Romans: Soulavie may have been inaccurate with respect to the details; and the father, who was of rank, Soulavie says, may have been called Tiercelin de Romans. The facts relative to Mademoiselle de Romans are taken from Madame Campan, whose testimony assuredly will not be suspected. This young girl afterwards became ambitious: she gained some influence over Louis XV. Become the mother of a son, she obtained permission for him to be baptized by the name of Bourbon, which was done for no other natural child of the King; and dreamed of causing him to be *legitimatized* like the children of Louis XIV., and of supplanting Madame de Pompadour. The King brutally wrested her child from her, and disgraced her. The child, who was called the Abbé de Bourbon, died in the following reign. Louis XVI. would have made him a cardinal.

[1] *Mémoires et Journal du marquis d'Argenson*, t. III. pp. 334–338.

Digitized by Google

The outbreak, however, having no determined object, subsided of itself after a few exempts and archers had been imprisoned to satisfy the populace. Two months after, the government avenged itself for the fear that it had undergone, by hanging, with great military parade, three of the authors of the *sedition*. The watch, which had acted with very little spirit, was reorganized, and was made a wholly military body; barracks were built around Paris for the French and Swiss guards. The King thenceforth avoided passing through Paris on his way to Compiègne or Fontainebleau; and the road which he took through Saint-Denis to Compiègne was called the *Street of the Riot*.[1]

"The King is despised," said Chesterfield in a letter written at the close of 1753; "and he has brought it about to be hated at the same time, which seldom happens to the same man." The secession of the great city from Louis the *Well-beloved* was irrevocable.

The popular hostility was still too vague to be productive of immediate results: but meanwhile, as soon as the return of peace had permitted French society to fall back upon itself, the dissensions and collisions, constantly ruder and more frequent, had been renewed among the great bodies that filled the highest social positions; the wheels of the political machine worked with more and more difficulty, and seemed continually nearer the point of breaking. Every thing was worn out and disjointed. These dissensions divided the very council of the King, where the only two ministers of any importance were in opposition. The reign of Madame de Pompadour was not absolute. The minister of finance, Machault, belonged to her; but the minister of war, D'Argenson, refused to bow to the favorite, and the King nevertheless retained him, partly through habit, partly through liking for his agreeable and vivacious mind. Madame de Pompadour was on bad terms with the clergy, for the reason that the prelate who held the list of the benefices (a kind of ministry of ecclesiastical affairs), the Bishop Boyer, was a narrow but sincere devotee; that the new Archbishop of Paris, Christophe de Beaumont (appointed in 1746), was as austere as Vintimille had been complaisant; and that, since the promotion of the Archbishop, the Jesuits, clustering round De Boyer, De Beaumont, the Queen, and the young Dauphin, showed a rigidity towards the reigning power that was not in accordance with their traditions. They sacrificed the present to the future; refused the communion to the King and his mistress,

[1] See *Journal de Barbier*, t. III. pp. 124–156; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. II. p. 350.

Digitized by Google

expecting that age and fear would bring Louis back to them; and trained an heir to the throne according to their heart, — a policy more honorable, after all, than that with which they had so often been reproached. Madame de Pompadour, through rancor, therefore, supported Machault, who entertained great designs against the privileges of the clergy, and who was conciliatory towards the parliaments. D'Argenson, on his side, favored the clergy, and urged the King against the parliaments through family tradition and through rivalry of Machault.

M. de Machault, who lacked comprehension of the general interests of France, as was to be but too soon perceived, had extended views in financial affairs. The State was bending beneath the weight of the enormously increased debt, and Machault was fully conscious that it was too late to extricate it by economy, — by a negative administration after the manner of Fleuri. Moreover, neither Madame de Pompadour, nor the great military establishment kept up in France, as everywhere, after the peace of 1748, nor, lastly, the necessity of again creating a fleet, permitted economy. Machault had supported the last campaigns by increasing the villain-tax and various duties; establishing new taxes; raising the *octrois*,[1] the capitation-tax, and the tithe on incomes, four sous a livre; creating life-*rentes*, etc. As soon as peace was made, he caused a series of measures to be decreed, advantageous to agriculture and commerce. The export and import duties on manures, and the import duties on raw materials, were abolished. The duty of fifty sous a ton on foreign ships was doubled. All the inferior jurisdictions, provostships, castellanies, *vigueries* (provostships of Languedoc and Provence), etc., were abolished in the towns in which there were bailiwicks or seneschalships (April, 1749).

These were only the preliminaries to a broad plan of financial reform. Machault projected the gradual redemption of the debt, and the reformation of direct taxation as the means of attaining this end by a system of gradual extinction.

An ordinance of May, 1749, converted the tithe on incomes, established in 1741, and which was to have been abolished on the recurrence of peace, into a tax of one-twentieth of all revenues, without the power of commutation or redemption; which twentieth was to form a general sinking-fund, designed to redeem the

[1] Taxes on consumption established in the towns and burghs, originally for the use of the municipal administration, but in which the public treasury afterwards participated. — See *Dict. de l'Économie Politique*. — Tr.

Digitized by Google

public debt. One million eight hundred thousand livres of *rentes* at five per cent, emitted at the same time, in order to procure immediate resources, and redeemable in twelve years, were the only revenue exempted from the twentieth. The war-tithe had not been very productive; the privileged persons of all classes had redeemed themselves from it; and the clergy had maintained its right of exemption at the price of *gratuities*. Machault was resolved no longer to listen to these compromises, but to renew the undertaking in which Pâris Duvernei had formerly failed; that is, to establish, for the first time, a truly universal direct tax. The estimates rigorously made by the intendants valued this twentieth at twenty-one millions, almost as much as the former tithe;[1] and this did not even include the clergy, as Machault intended.

The new tax excited lively murmurs everywhere: even those who had the most interest in a reformation founded on an equitable basis saw in it only a new burden in addition to the others. The parliament remonstrated, then registered it, by the command of the King. At the bottom, the anti-clerical policy of the comptroller-general could not have been displeasing to the magistrates: the resistance was more obstinate in a few of the *pays d'État* which had preserved, of their ancient liberties, only the vain formality of a periodical gratuity, and the more important right of themselves apportioning and collecting the tax. The twentieth, a quota-tax, was to be apportioned by the royal officers. The States of Brittany and Languedoc openly refused to pay the twentieth. The King dissolved the States of Languedoc. They did not sustain their opposition to the end: their wholly oligarchical composition rendered them a prey to the seductions of the court. The order of the clergy was formed only of the bishops; the order of the nobility, of a score of barons, the proprietors of certain privileged fiefs. They were gained over one by one, and finally submitted to the twentieth in order to recover the right to reassemble: the court, indeed, compounded with them by permitting them to apportion and collect the twentieth through the hands of their provincial officers (1757). Brittany, where each of the three orders was, so to speak, a relative democracy, where the lower clergy were represented, and where all the nobility had the right to sit in the chamber of nobles, was more obstinate than Languedoc. The principal members of the States were exiled in vain; no affidavits of the revenues were obtained; the twentieth

[1] It would be interesting to investigate the precise bases of these estimates: the net revenue was evidently in question; but how was it appreciated?

Digitized by Google

could not be collected; and the government, surrounded with embarrassments of all kinds, dared not carry matters to extremities. In Artois, the intendants were ordered to receive the affidavits of the revenues without further scrutiny. As early as 1751, all these difficulties and miscalculations compelled Machault to make new emissions of *rentes* to the capital value of about fifty millions.[1]

The parliaments had been tractable enough; the nobility had resisted only in the States of two or three provinces; the clergy resisted in a body with inflexible vehemence. They felt themselves the ones most threatened by the projected reform. They saw clearly that this reform was only a first step, and that Machault aimed at encroaching upon monastic property. An edict of August, 1749, the preamble of which drew a forcible picture of the means employed by mortmain corporations to monopolize private estates, had renewed and defined with precision all the ancient legal provisions designed to check the exorbitant growth of mortmain property; prohibited the foundation, by will, of any new religious community; enjoined on mortmain corporations to alienate within a year and a day, to persons not subject to mortmain, the property falling to the seigniories annexed to their benefices; declared void all the religious establishments founded since 1636 without the authorization of the King, reserving the right of ultimately granting them letters-patent should it be expedient, or of employing their property in the service of charity or of public utility; forbade all persons to lend their names to mortmain corporations to acquire property, etc., under penalty of a fine of three thousand livres, or greater penalties according to the exigencies of the case. Another edict, of August 17, 1750, enjoined on all holders of benefices to give, within six months, an affidavit of the revenues of their benefices, in order to insure the most equitable apportionment of "the subsidies, which are made a duty to the clergy by their fidelity." There was a unanimous outcry among the bishops, assailed at once in the general interests of the ecclesiastical order, and in their private interests; for the majority among them threw upon the lower clergy almost all the weight of the gratuities which they granted to the King. The fiery Archbishop of Paris addressed warm remonstrances to the King in his own name, and in that of a great number of his *brethren*. Louis XV. and his minister were assailed by letters, in which the prelates, in more or less respectful terms,

[1] See *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. pp. 224, 225, 248; Soulavie, *Mémoires de Richelieu*, t. VIII. pp. 192, 202; *Journal de Barbier*, t. III., May, 1751.

Digitized by Google

let it be known that they should obey *God rather than the King*. The comptroller-general, on his side, clandestinely circulated vehement books and pamphlets against the ecclesiastical privileges and the morals of the higher clergy. The clergy complained, and the council granted them the suppression of one of these books; but Machault found means to insinuate a sarcasm into the very terms of the decree. It was placarded at the corners of the streets that the King had prescribed the suppression of this work, as wishing to make the clergy pass "for the body, of all others, the least useful to society." The assembly of the clergy responded to the communication addressed to them of the edict of August 17 by a decided refusal. "We will never consent for what has hitherto been the gift of our love and respect to become the tribute of our obedience." The assembly was dissolved by the King's command (September 15), and a decree of the council enjoined on the intendants a first levy of seven millions and a half, *not consented to*, on the property of the Church, for the extinction of the debts of the clergy.[1]

This was a good beginning; but it was necessary for the government to persevere without permitting itself to be diverted by any event. The clergy knew the King too well to believe in this perseverance, and found means to raise up diversions by reviving the religious quarrels and the disputes concerning the jurisdiction of the temporal and spiritual powers.

The reaction of this policy fell on the unhappy Protestants. While the Archbishop of Paris and other prelates were preparing a machine of war against Jansenism, a sure means of entering into conflict with the parliament, the bishops of the South raised an outcry against tolerance, and reproached the government with abandoning the great work of the *Revocation;* a not less certain means of acting on the stereotyped mind of the King. God knows that the reproach was unfounded! Since the death of Fleuri, the persecution, on the contrary, had been relentlessly

[1] *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. pp. 226, 236; *Journal de Barbier*, t. III. pp. 144, 170, 172; Soulavie, *Mémoires de Richelieu*, t. VIII. c. ix.; *Journal du règne de Louis XV.* t. II. pp. 65, 66. Among the anonymous pamphlets hurled against the clergy was one that had no need of signature: it bore the mark of the lion's paw, the *Voix du Sage et du Peuple*. Voltaire maintains in this, with his usual spirit, that there are not *two powers*, but only one, — that of the State; that the Prince should be the absolute master of all ecclesiastical polity in every thing that has the least relation to the public order. He advises the King to "restore to the laws of Nature the imprudent men and women who have made a vow fatal to society at an age when it is not allowable to dispose of one's property," and extols the services that philosophy renders to princes by destroying superstition, "which is always the enemy of princes."

Digitized by Google

recommenced in consequence of a synod, which some pastors and elders, the deputies from a great number of provinces,[1] had held secretly *in the wilderness*, in Lower Languedoc, August 18, 1744. This assembly, the first that had met since the Revocation, had expressed no other sentiments than those of peace and extreme moderation. It had prescribed a solemn fast in all the Protestant churches for the preservation of the King's person, the success of his arms, and the deliverance of the Church; and had enjoined on the pastors to preach submission to the legitimate powers, to abstain from all direct controversy, and to use great circumspection in calling to mind the sufferings of the churches. The government had responded to the gentleness of the oppressed only by new acts of violence: two ordinances of February 1 and February 16, 1745, had prescribed that whoever had been present at the meetings of the Protestants should be sent to the galleys, without form of trial; the women were to be imprisoned for life; arbitrary fines were to be inflicted on all the *new converts* in the places where the meetings had been held, who, without being present, had not denounced them; and a fine of three thousand livres was to be imposed on every *new convert*, in a place where a minister had been arrested, who had not given information against him.

These monstrous measures could not be generally applied; but they delivered up the entire body of the Protestants to the absolute arbitrariness of the intendants, who spared or punished to suit their interests, their passions, and their caprices. The abduction of children still continued. A wealthy manufacturer of Nîmes, Sabonadière, is cited, who expended more than two hundred thousand livres in securing protectors to preserve for him his six children. Another merchant, Favène, having quarrelled with the intendant of Upper Guienne, the latter revenged himself by wresting from him his favorite daughter. The position of the Protestants towards the provincial despots was that of the Christian *rajahs* towards the Turkish pachas in the worst days of the Ottoman Empire. The women arrested in the wilderness had their heads shaved, and were publicly whipped; then were sent for life to the tower of Constance at Aigues-Mortes, so renowned in the martyrology of the Reformation. Young girls were shut up

[1] There had been delegates from Upper and Lower Poitou, Aunis, Angoumois, Saintonge, Périgord, Upper and Lower Languedoc, Lower Guienne, Cévennes, Vivarais, Velay, Dauphiny, and Normandy. — Coquerel, *Histoire des Églises du Désert*, t. I. pp. 279–301.

Digitized by Google

there at six years of age, who became decrepit at twenty, through excessive destitution and the exhalations of the salt marshes. The noise of these atrocities reached and agitated foreign countries. Frederick II. demanded liberty for these unfortunates. He obtained nothing (1745–1749).

Such was the state of affairs, when the most turbulent of the southern bishops reproached the ministers, in letters that were made public, with *protecting* the Protestants. Good citizens, friends of humanity, vainly strove to warn the government against these cruel instigations.[1] The minister who had the jurisdiction of the affairs of the Protestants, Phelippeaux de Saint-Florentin, Duke de la Vrillière, was devoted to the clergy: the minister of war (and this is a great stigma on the Count d'Argenson) lent him his coöperation. Troops had been put into the field as early as November, 1750, to prevent or surprise the meetings in the wilderness. In spite of the ordinances, numerous Protestant baptisms and marriages were celebrated in the meetings. In the month of April, 1751, a circular enjoined on the Protestants to present their children baptized in the wilderness, within fifteen days, at the Catholic churches, in order that the baptism might be confirmed by orthodox rites. The majority did not obey; and, during the whole year 1751, meetings were continually tracked, surprised, and fired upon by the soldiers, who often accosted these unarmed bands with discharges of musketry. A preacher, aged twenty-six, Bénezet, was taken, and hung at Montpelier, March 27, 1752. The farm laborers of Cévennes and Vivarais, the year before, had fled to the forests, abandoning their harvests. It was attempted to pursue them in their rugged retreats, after *dragooning* the peasants in the suburbs of Nîmes to force them to present their children to the curés. The mountaineers lost patience. The dragoons, guided by the curés and Jesuits, fell into an ambuscade near Levignan, in the Gardonenque: two curés were mortally wounded; and a Jesuit, it is said, was killed. This event made a lively impression on the King, who

[1] See *Le Patriote français et impartial*, by Court de Gébelin, 1751. The book of the Abbé de Caveirac (*Apologie de la Révocation de l'édit de Nantes*, with a *Dissertation sur la journée de la Saint-Barthélemi*) was written in reply to the *Patriote français* (1757). Caveirac seems to have been the father of that generation of sophists who ape cold fanaticism, and who seek, in the rehabilitation of the crimes of the past, their scandalous renown. A little book of much more importance than the *Patriote*, — the *Conciliateur*, — addressed in 1754 to the ministers and the counsellors of State by a young master of requests, announced a great statesman and a good man. The author's name was TURGOT.

Digitized by Google

feared the renewal of the War of the Camisards. Louis ordered the dragoonades to cease, and prescribed that the new converts, who wished to consecrate their marriages celebrated in the wilderness, according to the Catholic forms, should no longer be obliged to acknowledge their children bastards. The meetings were held almost without obstacle in 1753. The clergy did not permit this kind of truce to last: the King yielded anew, at least so far as the meetings were concerned; and, as early as the beginning of 1754, the Marshal de Richelieu, the Governor of Languedoc, issued the most violent instructions for the persecution of the conventicles. This sceptical and depraved courtier unscrupulously seconded the frenzy of fanaticism: the massacres commenced anew in the wilderness. The pastor Lafage, educated, like most of his brethren, in the seminary at Lausanne, was delivered up by an informer, condemned, and executed in twenty-four hours, August 17, 1754, by the simple decree of the intendant of Lower Languedoc. Public opinion was still more warmly moved by an incident that has remained celebrated. A son, who had escaped from a meeting surprised by the soldiers, on seeing from a distance his father fall into their hands, returned, and entreated the commander to send him to the convict prison[1] instead of the old man (January, 1756). The exchange was accepted. The Duke de Mirepoix, the lieutenant-general of the province, offered the son, Jean Favre, his liberty, on condition that the renowned minister, Rabaud, whom he had not succeeded in seizing, would quit the kingdom. Jean Favre refused to propose this condition to his brethren, and remained six years in the convict prison.[2]

The instigators of the persecution imagined that they were still supported by society, as in the times when fanatical passions held sway: they did not perceive that a void was formed around them, and that the frivolity and corruption of the age alone blunted the public indignation and disgust. As soon as a more virile generation appeared, the explosion could not fail to take place.

Dissensions which irritated the people and disturbed the pleasures of the court corresponded at Paris to the odious acts which stained Languedoc with blood. The two leaders of the Molinist party, Boyer and Christophe de Beaumont, stirred up this agita-

[1] The galleys no longer existed: they had been abolished in 1748.

[2] Normandy had also had its persecution. A great number of children were abducted there; and a multitude of Protestants were imprisoned, and subjected to fines. Six hundred emigrated. — See Lémontei, t. I. p. 160; Coquerel, t. II. c. i.–vi.

Digitized by Google

tion by a calculation that was not purely Machiavellian. Fiery and unenlightened, but sincere devotees, they thought that they saw in the attack on ecclesiastical immunities the first step towards a general aggression of the Jansenists and philosophers, whom they confounded in their hatred; and resolved to defend orthodoxy by resuming the offensive through a species of inquisition. The Archbishop Beaumont commanded his curés to refuse the last sacraments to any sick person who did not present a certificate of confession, and who did not subscribe to the Bull *Unigenitus*. This was only the starting-point: the system of certificates of confession could be applied in many other cases than the last sacraments. At the first refusal of the sacraments, the parliament began to make investigations, which were repeatedly arrested by orders from the King (1749–1750). The contest, for some time retarded, was entered into thoroughly in 1752. The curé of Saint-Étienne-du-Mont refused the sacraments to the Duke of Orleans, the Regent's son, a zealous Jansenist, who had long since retired to the Abbey of Saint-Genevieve: the Prince caused them to be administered by his almoner, forbade the prosecution of the curé, and died February 4, 1752. Shortly after, an ecclesiastic, who had been attached to the household of the late Duke, fell ill: a new refusal ensued from the curé of Saint Étienne. The parliament issued a writ to apprehend the body of the curé (March 29, 1752). The council annulled the writ of the parliament. The parliament replied by a new decree, forbidding any ecclesiastic to make a public refusal of the sacraments under the pretext of the default of the presentation of a certificate of confession, or of the acceptance of the Bull, as if it were *a rule of faith* (April 18, 1752).

To appreciate the character of the intervention of the parliament in this matter, it must not be forgotten that the refusal of the sacraments involved the refusal of sepulture, and, consequently, a mark of infamy to the defunct and his family. Civil sepulture was no more possible than civil marriage, or civil certificate of birth. The magistracy had, therefore, good grounds for interfering in the name of public order and social law. The ministers of religious worship can only claim independence in their acts, where these acts, being of no value except in public opinion, do not carry with them civil effects, and where, religious worship being considered as a thing purely private, the clergy is neither supported nor authorized in any thing by the State.

The decree of the parliament was answered by a second decree

Digitized by Google

of the council, in which the King set himself up as a mediator; renewed the declarations in favor of the Bull, without, however, entitling it a *rule of faith;* prescribed that secular judges should not impose laws on the ministers of the Church in matters purely spiritual; and announced the formation of a commission, chosen from among the episcopate and the magistracy, to remedy the new disturbances that had just arisen (April 29).

The commission remedied nothing, and was listened to by no one. Refusals of the sacraments, multiplying from one end of France to the other; declamations resounding from every pulpit; the tribunals prosecuting the preachers and the curés; the bishops fulminating against the parliaments; the parliaments burning the letters of the bishops; the council of the King annulling the decrees of the parliament of Paris; the contradictory decrees of the parliament and the council simultaneously cried and placarded in Paris; the Jesuits burlesquing their adversaries in their college comedies; the Jansenists parrying the thrusts by caricatures and pamphlets; the philosophers deriding and lampooning both parties, — such was the strange spectacle presented by France. It was no longer, as in the times of the Cardinal de Noailles, a civil war among the clergy. The system followed for so many years by Fleuri, then by Boyer, of conferring benefices on the Molinists alone, had borne its fruits: the clergy of Paris and the Sorbonne were now as much attached to the Bull as they had formerly been opposed to it, and the Jansenists were no longer any thing but an almost imperceptible minority in the French clergy: the contest was truly between the ecclesiastical and the judicial orders.

The year 1752 passed away in this agitation. In December, the storm redoubled in violence, on the occurrence of a new refusal of the sacraments by the curé of Saint-Médard to a Jansenist nun of Saint-Agatha. The archbishop declared that the curé had acted only by his orders. The parliament prescribed the seizure of the revenues of the bishop, and convoked the peers for the purpose of passing judgment on the prelate. Two cardinals and twenty-seven bishops hastened to Versailles to enter a complaint to the King of this outrage. The King prescribed the withdrawal of the seizure, and forbade the convocation of the peers. The nun who had caused the discussion was carried off by virtue of a *lettre de cachet.* The parliament disputed the ground, step by step, with as much obstinacy as hardihood. An incident will give an idea of this. It authoritatively ordered the Sorbonne to register

Digitized by Google

one of its decrees, in spite of the express prohibition of the King to the Sorbonne to deliberate on the subject. After several months of altercation, the King refused to receive the remonstrances of the parliament, — remonstrances which touched on many other things than the refusals of the sacraments, and which attacked the *lettres de cachet* and the leading abuses of arbitrary power (May 4, 1753).[1] The parliament suspended the course of justice. The Count d'Argenson and Boyer urged the King to an authoritative stroke. Madame de Pompadour, irritated at some speeches made against her among the parliamentarians, seconded her habitual adversaries. The president and the counsellors of inquiries and requests were exiled and dispersed through different towns within the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris, and four of the most vehement were sent as prisoners to the fortresses (May 9). The great chamber, which it had been sought to conciliate, protested, and confirmed all the past decrees. It was transferred to Pontoise (May 11). The magistrates did not give way. The parliaments of Toulouse, Aix, Rouen, and Rennes, and the Châtelet of Paris, were engaged in the same struggles as the parliament of Paris, and encouraged its resistance. The court endeavored to dispense with the parliament by instituting, to judge in its place, a court commissioned to sit during the recess, composed of counsellors of state, and masters of requests (September 18, 1753). This provisional court was reviled by every one. It dared not install itself at the Palais. Neither advocate nor attorney would appear before it. It sufficed for the court and the Jesuits to be on one side, for the public to be on the other.

At Martinmas, the epoch of the annual beginning of the terms, the great chamber was exiled from Pontoise to Soissons; and the provisional court in session during the recess received the title of the *royal chamber*, as if it had been a definitive tribunal. It was established at the Louvre. Nothing was gained thereby. The passive resistance continued. This was serious. The magistracy had not had this firmness under the Regency. Men were beginning to recover their vigor. On the other side, the Molinist clergy, intoxicated with their apparent victory, carried disturbance into all families by their certificates of confession. Madame de Pompadour began again to fear the ascendency of the devotee party at

[1] A Knight of Malta, M. de Rességuier, was, at this very moment, imprisoned in an *iron cage* on Mount Saint-Michel for some satirical verses. Every one knows the story of Latude, buried for so many years in the dungeons of the Bastille for a threatening letter to Madame de Pompadour.

Digitized by Google

court, and to arouse the King's distrust of the coteries of the Dauphin. The King welcomed the idea of a general compromise. On the one hand, Machault was authorized to negotiate with the parliament; on the other, the Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld undertook to induce the clergy to renounce the certificates of confession, provided that the *twentieth* were no longer exacted of them. The cardinal acknowledged thereby that the certificates of confession had been nothing but a political manœuvre, at least to the main body of the party. The manœuvre had been successful, since the court abandoned the financial plans of the comptroller-general. Machault was not disgraced; but he was transferred to the marine, and the comptroller-generalship was given to M. de Séchelles, an ex-intendant of the army (the end of July, 1754). The clergy made a *gratuitous offering* to the King: the *pays d'États*, the free towns, the great nobles, — all who had wealth or credit, — redeemed themselves from the twentieth by commutation. The project of equalizing the direct tax, and that of sinking the debt, vanished together. The redemption that had been begun soon ceased. The twentieth served momentarily to fill up the deficit in the current expenses, and nothing remained of the admirable plans of Machault but an additional tax.[1]

The royal chamber having been abolished August 30, the parliament was reinstalled September 4, amid the applause of Paris and of France. On the 5th it registered a royal declaration, which renewed the injunction of silence concerning religious disputes, and commissioned the parliament to attend to its execution. The birth of a second son of the Dauphin, the Duke of Berry (August 23, 1754), had been the occasion and pretext for this hollow peace, which, in fact, was not even a truce. This child, who was destined to pass his sad life amid storms, and to be swallowed up in the gulf dug by his grandfather, was the unfortunate Louis XVI.

A confused mixture of arbitrariness and anarchy, and a profound disrespect for the King's person, the government, and the clergy, — such were the characteristic features of the picture presented by the interior of the kingdom. How could it be hoped that France would sustain herself abroad in such conditions, and

[1] Soulavie, t. VIII. c. ix., xi.; Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 135. A new loan of forty-five millions had been made in October, 1752. — See *Journal de Barbier*, t. III. p. 412. A petty State had just followed the example already abandoned. Sardinia had subjected the property of the clergy to taxation in 1752.

Digitized by Google

that such a government would second the aspirations of the national genius in external relations?

Efforts, however, were made to this end, not only by the men who were pursuing glorious designs on the other side of the world, but in the cabinet itself of the King so justly decried. Insignificant men had succeeded each other in the ministry of foreign affairs, — Puisieux, who resigned in 1751; Saint-Contest, who died in 1754; Rouillé, transferred from the marine to the foreign affairs[1] at the death of Saint-Contest: but a high personage, a prince of the blood, had succeeded in winning the King, and in gaining a great influence over the direction of diplomacy outside of the council.

It has been seen, that, as early as the ministry of the Marquis d'Argenson, Louis XV. had begun to carry on a diplomatic correspondence unknown to his ministers. In 1745, a deputation of Poles had come to Paris to offer to the Prince de Conti the eventual nomination to the throne of Poland. The King had permitted Conti to listen to this offer, and to put himself in a position to profit by it. This son of the contemptible Conti of the Regency had had a more than tempestuous youth, and traits of brutal and cruel debauchery had seemed to announce another Count de Charolais; but age had wrought an unhoped-for change in him: an enlightened and honorable ambition had tempered this frenzied restlessness, and he had devised a system of foreign policy, which was a return to the sound national traditions, and which would have revived the French preponderance on the continent. To preserve the spirit of the treaty of Westphalia in Germany; to unite, by a perpetual treaty, Turkey, Poland, Sweden, and Prussia, under the mediation, then with the addition, of France; to separate thus by a chain of hostile States those dangerous allies, Austria and Russia; and to set up a barrier, from the Pole to the Archipelago, between Europe and Russia, which would be forced back into its deserts, — such was not certainly the conception of a common mind. Poland was the pivot of this system, which was opposed to that of the Marquis d'Argenson only on a single point: namely, Conti wished to attribute to himself the part that D'Argenson destined for the House of Saxony.[2] The end was the same; the

[1] Maurepas, the Minister of the Marine almost from childhood, had been removed in 1749 through the influence of Madame de Pompadour, irritated at his epigrams. Rouillé, a cipher in foreign affairs, had rendered services to the marine. Great improvement was made in ship-building under Maurepas' ministry and his own.

[2] D'Argenson, in his Memoirs, seems to us unjust to the Prince de Conti.

Digitized by Google

means were different. The incapacity and unworthiness of the Saxon princes were a very grave objection to D'Argenson's project. The great difficulty in Conti's whole plan was to secure Prussia. Frederick II. had secret views concerning Poland which did not accord with the design of reviving this State, although otherwise he was fully disposed to thwart Russia and Austria.

Conti could not hope to be summoned to the council: he knew that Louis XV., since he had attained the age of manhood, had returned to the tradition of his great grandfather with respect to the princes of the blood, and would confide to none of them an official participation in the government. He had therefore evaded the question by praising to the King "the advantage that His Majesty would derive from being instructed in several different ways," and by inducing him to open, from 1748, an extensive correspondence unknown to the ministers and to Madame de Pompadour, — a correspondence carried on partly by secret agents, partly by the ambassadors and the very subordinates of the secretary of foreign affairs. From this, the King fell into the habit of analyzing and discussing this correspondence secretly, and at stated times, with Conti, who, without title or official character, thus duplicated, in some sort, the minister of foreign affairs with respect to the affairs of the Continent, placed his emissaries in the embassies of Constantinople, Stockholm, Warsaw, and Berlin, and held in his hand all the relations of the North and the East. The King appeared wholly converted to his system. Louis XV. was very well acquainted with diplomatic interests, and saw correctly enough when it was only in question to calculate remote chances, and to treat diplomacy as a game of chess which diverted his idleness: his vision was troubled only when spirit and action were demanded of him.[1]

These were needed with respect to England: in this direction, therefore, the policy of the government was wretched. Nevertheless, an effort seems at first to have been made to elevate France. The minister of the marine, Rouillé, proposed to the council a gigantic plan, conceived by his predecessor, Maurepas, for the restoration of the fleet: he entertained the design of building, in ten years, one hundred and eleven ships of the line and fifty-four frigates. Unfortunately, the activity was not in proportion to

[1] Flassan, *Histoire de la Diplomatie française*, t. V. p. 292; *Notes et Mémoires du comte de Broglie*, ap. Ségur, *Politique de tous les cabinets de l'Europe*, t. I. pp. 55, 167. This work contains very important documents concerning the secret diplomacy of Louis XV.

Digitized by Google

such great projects; and neither diplomatic intelligence nor diplomatic energy corresponded to this resolution to restore our material means of action. The maintenance, at any price, of the peace that had been so dearly purchased, comprised the whole policy of Louis XV. England, on the contrary, saw in peace only a halt whereby to regain her strength and to prepare for new enterprises: she had regular means of compelling her government to serve her wishes and to pursue her destinies, which were lacking to France. While, among us, the financial plans of Machault were defeated by the resistance of the privileged classes, in England the minister Pelham obtained the passage of a bill which reduced the interest on the debt from four and a half to three and a half per cent, then to three per cent (1750), not by means of compulsion, that is, by partial bankruptcy, but by offering the creditors the choice between redemption and the reduction, which almost all accepted. Of the two governments, the one improved its situation; the other made it worse from day to day.

France and England, meanwhile, were at war in point of fact, despite the official peace, on the opposite sides of the world, — in North America and in Hindostan. No treaty could have established lasting harmony between the colonies of the two nations, impelled against each other, not only by the rivalry of their mother-countries, but by their own passions and interests. Nothing had been done to weaken this species of fatality. The cabinet of Versailles, by its very precipitancy in concluding peace, had neglected to render this peace enduring. The respective limits in North America had never been clearly defined. This question, which was assuming a constantly increasing importance, was left to be decided by commissioners. It was almost impossible that war would not arise from it. As to India, it was not on a fixed question, like that of frontiers, but on all points at once, that conflict was inevitable. Events were transpiring there of the most powerful interest, the most romantic character, — events, the like of which had not been seen since the Spanish *conquistadores* of the sixteenth century. The children of France were showing themselves very great at the extremities of the earth, while their government was so insignificant! In Canada, if the genius was not so resplendent as in India, the heroism was at least equal.

The development of Dupleix's projects had not been interrupted by the peace, which had been so painful to this great man.[1] The

[1] The comptroller-general Machault, who had the Indian Company in his department, had written to Dupleix, as early as May 12, 1748, that Madras must be restored

Digitized by Google

Governor of French India neither would nor could be checked. Unable longer to attack the English openly, he resolved to oppose them indirectly by securing the preponderance of our allies over theirs, and by destroying the balance of power between them and ourselves through the increase of our influence and territory. We have already described the system by which he designed to attain dominion over India. To interfere in the quarrels of the Mogul and Hindoo princes, and to make a place for himself in their hierarchy, were the principal means.[1] An audacious policy was here the policy of good sense. An exclusively commercial policy was an illusion. Private individuals, carrying on the inter-Indian trade under the protection of the company, could make a fortune: the company could not do so. "Dupleix was convinced, after an attentive examination, that commerce, reduced to itself alone, could not be made in any degree profitable, by reason of the obstacles placed in its way by the Indians; the duties which were imposed on the merchandise, and which swallowed up all the profits; the endless extortions of the rajahs, nabobs, and zemindars; and, above all, the necessity of supporting troops for the defence of the factories. There was no middle course, therefore, between conquest and abandonment."[2]

After the peace of 1748, Dupleix kept, therefore, all his French and native troops on foot, promising the company that these troops should not long be a burden to it. The English, on their side, did not disband, and were even the first to set the example of territorial invasion. In 1749, they put an auxiliary corps at the service of a pretender to the petty Indian kingdom of Tanjore, a southern adjunct of the Carnatic, and attacked the reigning rajah. The rajah ceded to them the maritime town of Devicotta: at this price they abandoned the pretender whom they had put forward, and even undertook to keep him in prison in behalf of his rival.

Dupleix soon had a signal revenge. He meditated vaster designs; but he had been forced to hold them in reserve during the life of the aged subahdar (viceroy) of the Deccan, — the Nizam El Molouk, an astute and sombre politician, who had lately drawn Nadir Shah upon the north of Hindostan to secure for himself the dominion of the south; and who, to the age of more than a hun-

as soon as peace was concluded, without even waiting for the English to restore what they had conquered from us. — Saint-Priest, *Études historiques sur le dix-huitième siècle; La Perte de l'Inde sous Louis XV.*

[1] See *ante*, p. 280.

[2] Saint-Priest, *La Perte de l'Inde sous Louis XV.*

Digitized by Google

dred, had succeeded in holding in terror all the nabobs and rajahs of the Peninsula, his vassals. The death of the nizam opened the way. His son, Nazir Jung, caused himself to be proclaimed subahdar, and was recognized by the English. His grandson, the nephew of the nazir, Murzapha Jung, claimed the inheritance, by virtue of a will of the defunct nizam, and solicited the support of the French. As to the Great Mogul, or padishah, the nominal sovereign, he sold a duplicate firman of investiture to each competitor: this was all the share that he took in the contest. The events that transpired in the Deccan were repeated in the Carnatic, the nabobship where the principal French and English settlements were found. The reigning nabob, Anvar Addien Khan, or Aliverdi Khan, had been the enemy of the French since they had refused to deliver to him Madras; and Dupleix had raised up a rival to him by the name of Chunda Sahib, a scion of the family from which Aliverdi Khan had wrested the nabobship. Dupleix united together the two pretenders, Murzapha Jung and Chunda Sahib, sent them a reënforcement of French and sepoys, and precipitated them first on the nabob of the Carnatic. They attacked with forty thousand men Aliverdi Khan, who had only twenty thousand: of the forty thousand assailants, four hundred were French, and nearly two thousand regular native troops. The success could not be doubtful. Aliverdi Khan, a centenarian like the late nizam, commanded in person, mounted on a magnificent elephant: such things are seen nowhere but in India![1] A French bullet hurled him dead from his lofty seat. His army dispersed (August 3, 1749).

The victors went to Pondicherry itself to thank Dupleix. They were not ungrateful. Chunda Sahib ceded to the French the town of Vilnoor, near Pondicherry; Murzapha Jung promised them the much more important town of Masulipatam, on the coast of Orissa, at the north of the Carnatic, where the finest muslins and the most beautiful calicoes of India were made.

The English, preoccupied with their Tanjore expedition, had not assisted Aliverdi Khan: their company had, as yet, no general views beyond commerce and maritime positions. They remained for some time stunned, as it were, by the revolution in the Carnatic, and despatched only an insignificant assistance to Mahomet Ali, the son of Aliverdi Khan, who had retired to Trichi-

[1] "In these strange countries, every thing is marvellous, even the duration of life: strength and weakness are equally unbounded. Man either wears out or becomes hardened in a heat as excessive as his passions." — Saint-Priest, *ibid.*

Digitized by Google

nopoly, the chief town of a little province dependent on the Carnatic, at the west of Tanjore. Dupleix urged his allies to capture this last position from the enemy. Unhappily, the two Mogul princes made a diversion against the Rajah of Tanjore, whom they forced to return under the suzerainty of the Carnatic, to pay a heavy tribute to Chunda Sahib, and to cede some territory around Karikal to the French (December, 1749). But meanwhile the English, recovered from their stupor, had entered into correspondence with the Subahdar of the Deccan, the rival and uncle of Murzapha Jung. The Subahdar Nazir Jung had resolved to overpower his competitor before the latter was in a position to return to attack him in the centre of his power. He precipitated all the forces of the Deccan upon the Carnatic: an avalanche of men, horses, and elephants, covered the coast of Coromandel. Nazir had, it is said, three hundred thousand soldiers, of whom more than a hundred and fifty thousand were horsemen, eight hundred cannon, and thirteen hundred elephants. A few hundred English were swallowed up, as it were, in this prodigious army (March, 1750).

The situation was critical. Murzapha and Chunda Sahib fell back under Pondicherry with their troops. The numerical inferiority was enormous: on the other hand, although Dupleix had advanced a very large sum from his own funds, money and resources were lacking; demoralization spread among the French soldiers, and even the officers; and the disorder became such, that the commander, D'Auteuil, fearing a rout at the first attack, ordered the French soldiers to return to the town. Chunda Sahib followed them with his troops. Murzapha Jung could not prevail on himself to suffer the great standard of the Deccan, which was in his hands, to *retreat*, which would have covered it with indelible infamy in the eyes of the Moguls: he preferred capitulating. Nazir Jung swore on the Koran to leave him his liberty, and the government of a province. Murzapha repaired to the tent of the subahdar: he was seized, and loaded with chains; and his companions, treacherously assailed, were cut to pieces.

In such circumstances, it seemed as if not to be annihilated, and to save Pondicherry a second time, was the highest ambition that one could propose to himself. Another would have thought only of life: Dupleix did not cease for a single day to think of empire. Arms were powerless: he set in motion the springs of that vast diplomacy, that endless correspondence, long carried on by his wife, *Joanna Begum*, with all India. He attempted to nego-

Digitized by Google

tiate: Nazir consented. From that moment, Nazir was lost. Dupleix was thoroughly acquainted with the dissensions which existed between all the different chiefs and tribes that formed the immense and confused army of Nazir. He did not obtain acceptable conditions; but he gained time, entered into secret relations with the Patan[1] and Mahratta chiefs; then, in order to raise the military reputation of the French, caused a handful of soldiers one night to surprise the enemy's camp, buried in the heavy sleep of opium, and filled it with disturbance and terror. Nazir broke up his camp (the end of April), and, abandoning the siege of Pondicherry, went to take possession of Arcot, the chief town of the Carnatic. Discipline returned with fortune. Dupleix vigorously resumed the offensive. Mahomet Ali, Chunda Sahib's competitor for the nabobship of the Carnatic, kept the field with twenty thousand men. The French, commanded by Combeau d'Auteuil, utterly defeated Mahomet Ali, despite the support of an English detachment, and took possession, by escalade, of Gingee, a place rendered the strongest in India by its position between three mountains, crowned with citadels, and commanding the upper part of the river of the same name, at the mouth of which Pondicherry is situated (August, September, 1750).

The news of the capture of Gingee aroused Nazir: he quitted Arcot, and turned again on the French with more than a hundred thousand men; the rest had returned to the Deccan. The rainy season (September–December) arrested him in the suburbs of Gingee. It was his turn to ask to treat. Dupleix carried on a double negotiation; the one public, with Nazir, the other secret, with the leaders of the malecontents, ready either to sign the peace if Nazir finally kept his word to Murzapha and gave the investiture of the Carnatic to Chunda Sahib, or to attack him if he refused. Nazir consented, but too late. While the ratified treaty was on the way to Pondicherry, the commander of Gingee, Le Prévost de La Touche, summoned by the conspired chiefs, moved upon the enemy by a night-march. At daybreak, eight hundred French and three thousand sepoys, with ten cannon, fell intrepidly on this camp of a hundred thousand men, which still numbered more than forty thousand horsemen, seven hundred elephants, and three hundred and fifty pieces of artillery. They drove before them all that they met. Contending with constantly renewed masses, they nevertheless began to grow weary of conquering. Behind the first line which they had broken, and the frag-

[1] Originally Afghans, settled in the south of India.

Digitized by Google

ments of which they had dispersed, they perceived a second line of at least forty thousand men. Suddenly, in the midst of this great stationary reserve guard, a white flag appeared above an elephant: it was the signal of the conspirators. The French halted: a great commotion speedily apprised them that a catastrophe had just occurred. Nazir Jung, furious at the inaction of the second line, had hastened thither with his guards, and addressed as dog and coward the first nabob whom he met, who was one of the Patan chiefs. The nabob answered by a bullet from his carabine, which hurled Nazir from his elephant. Nazir's head was carried to Murzapha Jung, who passed, without transition, from fetters to a throne. The battle ceased instantaneously. The whole army proclaimed or submitted to Murzapha.

December 15, 1750, Murzapha entered Pondicherry in triumph, borne in the same palanquin with Dupleix. The subahdar and the governor, in token of fraternity, exchanged their turbans and weapons in the presence of the people. A throne had been prepared for Murzapha in the French town. He seated Dupleix by his side, and received there the oaths of all the chiefs of the army: thirty nabobs and fifty rajahs were under the jurisdiction of his subahdarship. The first chief that rendered him homage, in the magnificent costume of the nabobs, was Dupleix himself. The subahdar, in the name of the Great Mogul, proclaimed Dupleix nabob of all the provinces on the south of the River Kistnah, which comprised, with the Carnatic, all the south of the Deccan, all the southern extremity of India, a country almost as large as France. It was really a division of the subahdarship. Chunda Sahib, the Nabob of the Carnatic, and many other nabobs and rajahs, were therefore, thenceforth, under the jurisdiction of Dupleix.[1] The boldest hopes had become realities: India for the first time recognized European superiority, and bowed before France.

Sudden revolutions of fortune succeeded each other with stunning rapidity in this gigantic drama. Murzapha set out to take possession of the Deccan, with his army and a small auxiliary corps, composed of three hundred French and two thousand sepoys, under the command of Bussi-Castelnau, the officer who had taken Gingee (January, 1751). Dupleix had recognized in Bussi the man of all others best fitted to understand and second him,

[1] The extent of the grant made to Dupleix has been disputed: in any case, it is beyond doubt that the nabobship of the Carnatic was granted to him, and that Chunda Sahib was his subordinate.

Digitized by Google

and had confided to him the glorious mission of doing in Central India what he himself was doing in the South: an inviolable friendship thenceforth united these two men. The genius of Bussi was soon put to the test. Scarcely had the army of the subahdar quitted the Carnatic when an insurrection broke out among those very Patans who had raised Murzapha to the throne over the corpse of Nazir, but to all of whose unreasonable demands, Murzapha, supported by Dupleix, had been unwilling to submit. The French put the rebels to flight: Murzapha pursued them. On seeing him, the Patan chiefs turned back, and urged their elephants against that of the subahdar. Murzapha accepted the challenge, mortally wounded one of the hostile nabobs, and fell, riddled with arrows and javelins.

Bussi avenged and replaced him. The principal chiefs of the Patans fell under the blows of the French or of their friends. Bussi, a conqueror, assembled the ministers and vassals of the deceased prince, and caused them to elect on the same day an uncle of Murzapha, Salabut-Jung. Salabut installed himself in Golconda, the ancient capital of the Deccan (April, 1751); but a formidable rival rose against him: one of his brothers purchased a firman of the Great Mogul, and drew upon the Deccan the entire confederation of the Mahrattas. Hemmed in by three armies which numbered full two hundred and fifty thousand men, Salabut and Bussi were in great peril, when the death of the pretender opportunely put an end to the civil war in the Deccan. The Mahrattas continued hostilities on their own account; but their immense cavalry could not stand against the musketry and artillery of a handful of French and Indian regular troops. After several repulses, they treated; and Salabut, the undisputed master of the Deccan, testified his gratitude to Bussi by conferring on the company, as a military fief, the investiture of five provinces as a guarantee of the pay of the auxiliary corps, which was greatly increased. These were the *circars* or circles of Condavir, Mustapha Nagar, Elora, Rajamundri, and Chicacole; in a word, all the coast of Orissa, extending north-east of the Coromandel and the River Kistnah, from Medapilly to the famous pagoda of Juggernaut, almost to the entrance of Bengal. Masulipatam thus became really the capital of a French kingdom, separated from the Deccan by a chain of mountains easily defended. The revenue of the new territories of the company was fifteen millions. The Great Mogul confirmed every thing. The French ruled, directly

Digitized by Google

or indirectly, a full third of India as to extent, and much more than a third as to wealth and population. Another step, and the Great Mogul would fall himself under our jurisdiction.[1]

Asia would have been ours, if, with Dupleix and Bussi in India, we had still had Louis XIV. and Colbert at Versailles, — if we had even had Law; but, instead of Louis XIV. and Colbert, we had Louis XV. and Pompadour, and the incapable revenue farmers that governed the Indian Company. As to the men of special talent in the ministry, Machault and Rouillé, they understood or would understand nothing but the wish of the King to maintain peace with England, and to keep silence at any price around the Parc-aux-Cerfs. The success of Dupleix, which dazzled France afar off, only caused the rulers disquietude and embarrassment: instead of reënforcements, they sent him exhortations to peace.

While the French government was appalled at its good fortune, the company, then the government of England, finally enlightened with respect to its Indian affairs, determined to arrest the progress of their rivals, and shook off their inertia to rekindle the war with vigor at the very nucleus of Dupleix's power in the Carnatic. Mahomet Ali, the rival of Chunda Sahib, the nabob of the French, had kept Trichinopoly, where he had been shut in by Chunda Sahib. At the beginning of 1751, the English sent him a reënforcement: the French sent one also to Chunda Sahib. The English were defeated: nevertheless, they succeeded in several times revictualling Trichinopoly (February–July, 1751). This place would have finally succumbed, had not a young man, who had recently been transferred from the bureaus of the English Company to the military service, suggested to his leaders to save the last asylum of Mahomet Ali by a diversion against Arcot, the chief town of the Carnatic. This young man was Clive, the future rival and successful imitator of Dupleix! The command of the expedition which he had counselled was given him. With a few hundred men, he seized Arcot without resistance. The inhabitants of these large Indian towns were accustomed to change masters like flocks of sheep (September, 1751). Clive defended his easy conquest with much energy against the troops despatched by Chunda Sahib and reënforced by a French detachment. Succored by a corps of Mahrattas, he forced the Franco-Indians to raise the siege of Arcot, and defeated them twice; then joined the

[1] About this epoch, he solicited of Madame Dupleix the hand of her youngest daughter; the same who was promised to Bussi as the price of his victories.

Digitized by Google

English commander-in-chief, Lawrence, to endeavor also to compel the raising of the prolonged siege of Trichinopoly.

These first repulses had shaken the ascendency of Dupleix in the south of the peninsula. The Mysore, a new kingdom formed at the west of the Carnatic, and which was destined later to struggle with so much obstinacy against the English power, declared itself in favor of Mahomet Ali and the English: the rajah of Tanjore followed this example. Lawrence, reënforced by twenty-five thousand Indians, was enabled, in his turn, to besiege the Franco-Indian corps which had besieged Trichinopoly, and which had withdrawn near by, to the two pagodas of Cheringam, an island of the River Cavery. A French detachment despatched from Pondicherry to the aid of Cheringam was hemmed in by Clive with superior forces, and obliged to surrender (April, 1752). Nothing was left for the corps shut up in Cheringam to do but to cut their way with the sword to Pondicherry. Unfortunately, the commander Law, the nephew of the famous comptroller-general, was not a Bussi. Hesitating and irresolute, he suffered his troops to become discouraged in inaction, and the English to bring siege artillery at their leisure from Devicotta. The nabob, Chunda Sahib, deeming a disaster imminent, attempted to escape, and purchased the protection of one of the hostile chiefs, the commander of the Tanjorians. The Tanjorian received the money, and delivered up Chunda Sahib, who was slaughtered. Law, threatened with being captured by assault in his island, capitulated: the whole French corps remained prisoners of war.

The effect of this news in France was deplorable. "*We were right!*" was the cry of every jealous mediocrity, of every official coward. The government seemed happy at seeing its predictions justified concerning the instability of all this glory. The reaction extended to the company. France doubted whether she had not been duped by a romance of empire. The fatal coincidence of the trial of La Bourdonnais, — a trial of which the public by no means saw the full scope, and in which the principal culprit was the government, contributed to prejudice men against Dupleix.[1]

[1] La Bourdonnais, as we have already said, exercised, from his acquittal to his death, a very unhappy influence on the company and the ministry. The correspondence of the brave D'Auteuil, who was at once his brother-in-law and that of Madame Dupleix, furnishes too many proofs of this. Some enlightened men, the Ex-Governor Dumas and others, had at first sustained Dupleix in the company; but they had quitted it, and the company had fallen into the worst possible hands.

Digitized by Google

The general opinion may be judged to a certain point from Voltaire, who was not hostile to Dupleix, but who, if he fully comprehended the importance of the relations with India in a scientific and philosophic point of view, understood absolutely nothing of it in a political point of view.[1] Public opinion, however, would inevitably have turned in his favor, had time been left it.

Dupleix had not been shaken a moment by his reverses: he put into the field the few soldiers that remained to him, reënforced by the crews of the company's vessels, in order to save at any price the fortified town of Gingee, his most valuable conquest. A first English corps despatched against Gingee was defeated: the commander-in-chief, Lawrence, repulsed the French in his turn, but did not take Gingee. Diplomacy began again to serve Dupleix: he gained over anew the inhabitants of Mysore, to whom Mahomet Ali had promised, then refused, the cession of Trichinopoly. The Mahrattas in the pay of Mysore joined the French: Dupleix created another nabob, named Mortiz Ali; advanced seven millions, either from his own funds or borrowed by him, to sustain the war; and, six months after the disaster to Law and Chunda Sahib, the offensive was resumed, and the siege of Trichinopoly renewed. Lawrence returned to the succor of this place. He was defeated on the very Island of Cheringam, the scene of his recent successes: he retrieved his position by two considerable advantages, and in October, 1753, provisioned Trichinopoly for some months. Six hundred French and a corps of sepoys attempted to surprise the place, which they could no longer hope to reduce by famine: they carried the first line of outworks, but could not force the second, and were partially surrounded, and taken between the double walls.

The indomitable Dupleix was not discouraged; but, to satisfy in some degree the ministry and the company, he opened conferences, in January, 1754, with Saunders, the Governor of Madras. Dupleix desired peace only on advantageous conditions: the English did not desire it at all. Dupleix counted on Bussi: Saunders counted, we will not say on his government, but on the French government, which he rightly appreciated! He was cognizant of the negotiations that had taken place between the two cabinets and the two companies since 1752. Dupleix refusing to recognize Mahomet Ali as the nabob of the Carnatic, the parleys were broken off. Meanwhile, the little French army had again

[1] See *Siècle de Louis XV.* c. xxix.; and *Fragments sur l'Inde*, appended to the *Histoire du Parlement de Paris.*

Digitized by Google

taken the field before Trichinopoly. In the month of February, 1754, a large provision train, escorted by the élite of the English troops, was captured, and all the escort destroyed. Bussi, hitherto retained in the Deccan by the necessity of holding the great Mahratta chiefs in check, and of thwarting the intrigues of the English at the very court of the subahdar, was about to be in a position to interfere in the Carnatic. Clive, on the contrary, the most brilliant officer and the ablest politician that the English possessed in India, had set out, sick, for Europe. Every thing announced a brilliant turn of fortune.

During this interval, some vessels of the company appeared in the roadstead of Pondicherry, bringing twelve hundred soldiers (August, 1754). It was more than would have been needed to complete the victory; but these vessels and soldiers were commanded by one of the directors of the company, charged with full powers by the French government to conclude peace with the English. The first act of this commissioner was to apprise Dupleix of his removal, and to take his place. The English cabinet had made the recall of Dupleix the absolute condition of peace; and Louis XV. and his ministers had bowed their heads!

Dupleix expected this: he knew the hatred that had accumulated against him. The company had insinuated to him the advice to ask for his recall: he had refused to do so, unless he were replaced by Bussi, the only man capable of taking up and finishing his work.[1] He had labored for the glory of France much more than for his own glory; and would have been resigned to obscurity and forgetfulness, provided that his idea triumphed in the name of another. He would have loved La Bourdonnais as he loved Bussi, had La Bourdonnais been willing to comprehend and second his system.

Instead of Bussi, a clerk by the name of Godeheu was given him as a provisional successor, — a man with no other talent than intrigue, and with no other system than peace at any price, and a base envy of the great man. This personage, after climbing step by step to the rank of director of the company, had been for several years pursuing an organized plan of treachery against Dupleix. It may be proved by his own confession in his manuscript journal, that he had systematically prevented the sending of troops enough to Dupleix to insure him the victory.[2] Dupleix,

[1] "There is no one to be seen greater than Bussi," he wrote in France. — Saint-Priest, *La Perte de l'Inde sous Louis XV.*

[2] *Journal du voyage de M. Godeheu*, p. 81; *MSS. de la Bibl.*, No. 6,990.

Digitized by Google

greater in misfortune than he had ever been in triumph, restrained his grief and resentment, and strove to awaken, by force of magnanimity, some sentiments of honor and patriotism in this vile soul.[1] Bussi, indignant and despairing, wished to abandon every thing, and to depart with him: he forced him to remain in the Deccan, then entreated Godeheu at least to stretch out his hand to seize Trichinopoly, ready to fall. Godeheu removed the brave and able officer whom Dupleix had proposed for the direction of the siege. The English then succeeded in introducing supplies, and the place was saved. Godeheu sequestrated the revenues designed to reimburse the advances of Dupleix, which amounted to not less than thirteen millions. Dupleix embarked with his family for France. Two days after his departure, Godeheu signed a treaty with the English governor, Saunders, the basis of which had been fixed upon between the cabinets of Versailles and St. James (October 11, 1754). It was stipulated that the two companies should be forever interdicted from interfering in the internal politics of India; that their agents should renounce all dignities, charges, or honors conferred by the princes of the country; that all the places and territories occupied by the two companies should be restored to the Great Mogul, except the possessions which they had held before the War of the Carnatic, which left the English Devicotta; that the possessions of the two companies should be put on a footing of perfect equality as to extent and revenue; that the district of Masulipatam should be divided between the two companies; that the French should renounce all territorial revenue (and consequently all political command) in the rest of the *circars* of Orissa; and that each of the two nations should have there only four or five factories.

The English ceded a few hamlets: France ceded an empire.

There is no example in modern history of a nation having been betrayed to this point by its government; it is the ideal of ignominy: to find any thing like it, we must go back to those cowardly kings of the East, who precipitated themselves from the throne at the beck of the Roman proconsuls.

France comprehended too late what she had lost. She discerned that the reverses, of which haste had been made to inform

[1] We have in our hands two letters written in September, 1754, under the blow of the recall of Dupleix; the one by Bussi, the other by one of the higher officers of the company. Nothing can be imagined more poignant as to the ruin of French influence in India, fallen in a single day, or more sublime as to the attitude and whole conduct of Dupleix. — Dupleix family papers, communicated by M. P. Margry.

Digitized by Google

her, had been on the point of being completely repaired. When Dupleix, and the heroic woman who had been the confidante and indispensable auxiliary of his designs, landed on the soil of France, a signal reaction broke forth in their favor. "My wife and I," wrote Dupleix, "dare not appear in Lorient for the concourse of people that wish to see us and bless us." At all the relays between Lorient and Paris, the people flocked around them with marks of sympathy and admiration, as if to protest against the recall of the hero of India. The court felt the reaction of this national impulse. The comptroller-general, Séchelles, the favorite, and the King, at first gave Dupleix and his wife so kind a reception, that they hoped for full justice. The illusion was speedily dispelled. No hope was realized; no promise was kept. Misfortune nevermore ceased implacably to pursue Dupleix and his family. Madame Dupleix died at Paris in December, 1756. Her daughter, who had been affianced to Bussi, soon followed her to the grave (April, 1759). Dupleix passed his last years in vainly seeking to recover his fortune and that of his friends, swallowed up in the costs of the war: his friends and relatives had devoted themselves with him. The company made them bankrupt likewise with the complicity of the government. An *order from the King*, that is, an impudent denial of justice, arrested the suit commenced by Dupleix against the company. He was compelled to obtain writs to stay the proceedings of his creditors, in order to avoid being dragged to prison; and died November 11, 1763, after witnessing the fall of our colonies, and the humiliation of that France which he had dreamed of as so glorious.

Modern France has not yet paid its debt to this illustrious victim of the monarchy. Dupleix still awaits a monument from that country which he sought to endow with a world. History, at least, has finally done its duty by proclaiming him one of the greatest men and the best patriots ever possessed by France, — a man of the race of the Richelieus[1] and the Colberts. He was born too late or too soon. He should have lived in 1660, or in 1792, — in an epoch of glorious organization, or in one of supreme danger and supreme devotion.[2]

[1] Of the race of Richelieu by genius, but purer in soul.

[2] See, on the Indian affairs, *Mémoire pour le sieur Dupleix, contre la Compagnie des Indes*, Paris, 1759, 4to; *Réfutation des faits imputés au sieur Godeheu par le sieur Dupleix, ibid.*, 1764; Saint-Priest (who has examined, but without sufficient accuracy, many manuscript documents), *La Perte de l'Inde sous Louis XV.*; Barchou de Penhoën, *Histoire de la Fondation de l'empire anglais dans l'Inde*, t. I. liv. iv.; and the English

Digitized by Google

At the very moment when all the interests and all the future of France in Asia were sacrificed to an impossible peace, hostilities were reopened in the other hemisphere, in the wilds of North America.

Several questions had remained pending, after the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, between France and England, — one, of inconsiderable consequence, the partition of the Caribbean Isles (St. Lucia, Tobago, Dominica, and St. Vincent);[1] the other, far greater and of prime importance, the limits of Canada. It suffices to define this question to show that it was insoluble by diplomacy. It was not frontiers that were in dispute, but immense regions, — the empire of Northern America. The discussion dated back to the peace of Utrecht, which, in ceding Nova Scotia to the English, had not defined with precision the boundaries of this country. The English claimed that Acadia, or Nova Scotia, comprised not only the peninsula of Nova Scotia, but all the region situated between this peninsula, New England, the southern bank of the St. Lawrence, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence; that is to say, the whole south of Canada. They claimed the right, besides, to extend far to the south of Hudson's Bay, towards the north of Canada, and to spread at pleasure, from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Carolina, in the great Valley of the Ohio, as far as the south of Lakes Erie and Ontario. The French maintained, on the contrary, that Nova Scotia did not even comprise all the peninsula, but only the southern part; and that the whole course of the Ohio, which connected Canada with Louisiana, belonged to them, as well as the Mississippi, by virtue of the discoveries of Cavalier de la Salle. In short, the English wished to cut off communication between Canada and Louisiana, and to reduce Canada almost to nothing: the French wished to shut in the English colonists of the continent between Canada, the Appalachian or Alleghany Mountains, Louisiana, and the sea. With respect to Nova Scotia, the fact of possession was in favor of the French, who, after the peace of Utrecht, had only evacuated the peninsula, and had retained or founded numerous settlements between the St. Lawrence and the French Bay (or the Bay of Fundy), which separates Nova Scotia from Canada. It was evident that Louis XIV. had only intended to cede the peninsula; but

historians, Orme (the comrade and historian of Clive); Malcolm, *Vie de Clive;* Colonel Wilkes. M. Pierre Margry has collected all the materials for a biography of Dupleix, which will be a final authority concerning the life of this great man.

[1] These islands, by ancient agreements, had been left to the Caribs, and declared neutral; then France and England had begun to dispute them anew. The French had been settled at St. Lucia since the preceding century.

Digitized by Google

it was also evident that the point of right was the least thing in question here.[1]

The dispute was less between the two governments than between the two colonies. The English colony, or rather colonies, since, united in sentiments and interests, they were separated administratively, were no longer simple adjuncts, receiving their impulse from the mother-country, but political bodies, having an existence of their own, and a very lively instinct of their destinies. The inequality of wealth and population between the English and the French colonies of North America was prodigious. The latter, although they were progressing, since the population of Canada had more than tripled from the Regency to 1759 (twenty-five thousand souls in 1721, fifty thousand in 1744, eighty-two thousand in 1759), amounted to little more than eighty thousand souls. Their exportation in 1753 did not exceed the value of one million seven hundred thousand francs: their importation, through what was sent by the government, amounted to five million two hundred thousand francs.[2] There was so little mechanical art among them, that they bought of their English neighbors part of the vessels with which to carry on their internal navigation. The English colonies had at least twelve hundred thousand inhabitants. Their exports amounted to the value of thirty-seven millions, and their imports to that of twenty-four and a half millions.

The causes of this extreme inequality are not doubtful. We need not seek the explanation in the pretended maxim that *the French have no genius for colonization*, or in other analogous commonplaces. This inequality of growth pertained much less to the genius of the two nations than to the opposite system of the two governments. "We cannot too often repeat to France, who is seeking to-day to spread her race, language, and institutions in Africa, what ruined her colonial system in the New World, where she should have predominated. The lack of association in the mother-country for the encouragement of *agricultural* immigration, . . . the absence of liberty, and the passion for arms diffused among the colonists, — such were the principal causes through which Canada languished."[3] France should not disdain this ad-

[1] See Garneau, *Histoire du Canada*, Quebec, 1846, t. II. *passim*; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. I. p. 362.

[2] We quote the figures of M. Garneau: M. Dussieux, however, estimates the exportation of peltries for 1754 at three millions. — See L. Dussieux, *Le Canada sous la domination française*, p. 54, 8vo, Paris, 1855.

[3] Garneau, *Histoire du Canada*, t. II. p. 175. Concerning the comparative statistics of the French and English colonies, *ibid.*, t. III. p. 6.

Digitized by Google

vice, given from the other hemisphere by a child of that Canada which has remained French at heart after a century of foreign dominion.

In the English colonies, political and religious liberty manifested themselves from the beginning. The most varied elements accumulated, or were brought into juxtaposition. The aristocratic Anglican gentlemen of Virginia and the Carolinas, transformed later by the philosophical and republican influence of Locke;[1] the austere and democratic Puritans of New England; the peaceable and tolerant Quakers of Pennsylvania, — all varieties of opinion, all categories of English society, were represented in the New World. All whose interests or ideas clashed with those about them, all who were poor and courageous, crossed the sea without obstacle.[2] Among these different aggregations and legislations, each one found his place; even foreigners, Dutch, French, Swedes, and Germans. It was a universal asylum. The degrees of political liberty varied. Some colonies administered themselves; others had governors appointed by the King, or by the original landed proprietors, — a kind of feudal suzerains. Everywhere, however, popular assemblies participated in the power, and in the framing of the laws; everywhere the democratic spirit, enlightened by the progress of philosophy and tolerance, took the lead. A new England was formed there in an inverse direction to the old one; that is to say, the political elements that had been conquered or repressed in the old England of the seventeenth century were victorious without conflict in the America of the eighteenth century. This new England redoubled the native energy of its race by the substitution of the spirit of equality and rationalism for hereditary respect for existing institutions. A powerful agricultural and commercial activity signalized this youthful society.

The French colonies, on the contrary, seemed destined to be eternally in leading-strings, through political and religious despotism. The New World was chained by the laws and customs of the Old. The double arbitrariness of the governor and the intendant was tempered by the influence of the monks, instead of by popular representation: the development of human activity was everywhere fettered. There was not even the unity of absolute

[1] Locke was commissioned in 1673, by Lord Shaftesbury, to draw up the laws of South Carolina. His legislation was not enduring; but his spirit profoundly imbued America.

[2] The Stuarts had attempted for a moment to oppose it, and it had cost Charles I. dear. It is well known that an order of this King retained Cromwell and Hampden, when about to embark to America in 1638.

Digitized by Google

power; for the military or civil authority and the monastic influence were always at variance. The Jesuits subordinated the rest of the clergy, treated the colonial administrators as *persecutors of religion*, when they did not deliver up every thing to them without control; and showed themselves at once admirable in their missions among the savages,[1] and insupportable at the centre of the colony, — a contrast which cannot astonish us. They knew how to have every thing, *even saints*, to use the expression of Chesterfield, who had studied them so well. Their able leaders sent the *saints* to the post of danger, the politicians to that of intrigue.

To crown all these abuses, the governor, intendant, magistrates, and priests carried on commerce, and discouraged the merchants by a leonine rivalry: the Jesuits went so far as to engage in smuggling.[2] Orderly and civilized liberty, the regular development of minds and things, was therefore impossible: the Canadian fled to uncivilized nature; adventurous spirits, in which the colony abounded, took refuge in the independence of the forest; the colonist lived like the savage, and often with him. Hence came that *passion for arms* which the historian of Canada represents as fatal to the colony. The Canadian was neither an agriculturist nor a merchant, but a soldier-hunter, who cultivated only just enough for his needs, and who knew no other commerce than the vagrant traffic in peltries.

Louisiana, save the difference of climate, was in a condition analogous to Canada. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, a great number of Huguenots had taken refuge in the English colonies. The love of France still lived in their hearts; and, towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV., they entreated the aged King to permit them to settle in Louisiana. Louis refused. They renewed their prayer to the Regent: the Regent had not the courage to consent. They remained English despite themselves: their children were destined one day to take a glorious part in the enfranchisement of America.[3] How many times since the days of Admiral Coligni had the project of opening the French colonial

[1] With reservations and exceptions, of course.

[2] Garneau, *Histoire du Canada*, t. II. p. 533.

[3] "Of nine chairmen of the ancient Congress that conducted the United States through the Revolutionary War, three were descended from French Protestant refugees; namely, Henry Laurens of South Carolina, the celebrated John Jay of New York, and Elias Boudinot of New Jersey."—Garneau, t. II. p. 181. On the importance of the Huguenot element in English America, at New York and elsewhere, see Ch. Weiss, *Hist. des Réfugiés protestants*, t. II.

Digitized by Google

system to religious liberty been proposed, and how many times rejected by the monarchy! What would a free France have become in the New World? None can tell; but there is reason to believe that this was a great misfortune to France, and to America itself, the genius of which might have been modified and completed by a powerful French element. It is certain that the result has condemned the colonial system of political and religious absolutism, and has proved that great colonies are incompatible with the military régime and the rule of monks.

Of two rival systems of colonization, constituted as we have just described, one was evidently destined in the end to destroy the other. One thing alone had prevented this catastrophe from taking place ten times over during the century: that same passion for arms which fettered the growth of Canada had saved its life. The heroic tendencies of the French nature had expanded with marvellous energy in the adventurous life led by the colonists; and their martial superiority over their laborious neighbors had permitted them to resist forces which seemed destined to swallow them up. Among them, there were as many soldiers as there were men able to bear arms. They had the valor of the buccaneers without their cruelty.

Less warlike in habits, but not less enduring, and endowed with indomitable perseverance, the English continually resumed their plan of invasion, so many times defeated by the Canadian sword. The restitution of Louisburg to France by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had thrown them into consternation; and peace was scarcely signed, when they already used all their efforts to induce the English government to begin the war anew. "There is no repose for our thirteen colonies," wrote BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, "so long as the French are masters of Canada."[1] This speech of the most illustrious man that the English colonies then possessed expressed the general feeling of the Anglo-Americans. It is not certain, indeed, that, under this idea so hostile to France, there was not already another idea unfavorable to England, and that Franklin and many other colonists did not even then discern, at least as one of the possibilities of the future, the independence of America behind the conquest of Canada. Far-sighted minds had predicted among us, as early as 1711, that, if Canada were wrested from France, the English colonists, once rid of these warlike neighbors, would not be long in separating from their mother-

[1] Barbé-Marbois, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, p. 139.

Digitized by Google

country. In 1733, the Marquis d'Argenson had repeated this prediction in his Memoirs.

The projects of the Anglo-Americans were pursued with unity and decision. Adroit efforts were made with some success to break the bonds of that sympathy, or at least that preference, which attracted the majority of the savages to the French, and won formidable auxiliaries for the latter. The English offered the *red-skins* the bait of a more advantageous, more extended, and freer trade. At the same time, the English posts were moved forward on all sides. In 1749, a company, formed in the mother-country and the colonies, procured a grant of six hundred thousand acres in the Valley of the Ohio, the *Beautiful River*, as it was called by the French: other projectors of colonial settlements set about advancing from Nova Scotia towards the southern bank of the St. Lawrence, and from Hudson's Bay towards the north of Canada. The French governor, La Galissonière, prevented the English from quitting the Nova-Scotian peninsula, and drew upon the Canadian territory, at the north of the Bay of Fundy, a part of the Nova-Scotians of French extraction who had not quitted their country after the cession in 1713, and who had succeeded hitherto in evading the oath of allegiance to the King of England, and the obligation to preserve neutrality in time of war. He held his ground also on the Ohio, whence he expelled the English traders: he had taken possession of the country, as early as 1748, by planting stakes at the principal points of this vast and verdant wilderness. He erected forts to support the formal taking of possession, and requested the Governor of Pennsylvania to keep his colonists on the east of the mountains. La Galissonière was recalled during the interval: on his return, he did all in his power to enlighten the government concerning the dangers of Canada, and the means of defence to be employed; and urged the ministers to send ten thousand French farm laborers as speedily as possible to people the shores of the lakes and the upper part of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, in order to secure the colony against the dearth that threatened it as soon as the war broke out. The cabinet of Versailles did not send a peasant, while the English cabinet sent nearly four thousand new colonists to found Halifax in Nova Scotia.[1]

[1] On every thing that regards Canada, see Garneau, t. II. *passim*. Advice was not lacking: the aged Marshal de Noailles presented excellent memorials to the King on the means of despatching military colonists gradually, and without noise, to Canada. — See *Mém. de Noailles*.

Digitized by Google

Here, as in India, the cabinet of Versailles had no other idea than that of peace, and negotiated instead of preparing to fight. It had urged, then entreated, the English government to proceed to the formation of the mixed commission that was to regulate the questions which remained pending. England made no haste, and consented only with an ill grace. Memorials were exchanged, then conferences were opened from September, 1750. They were as numerous as useless. We have already set forth the respective pretensions. They differed so widely, that it was impossible to agree. The French cabinet was not treading here on new and unknown ground as in Hindostan; it dared not sacrifice the interests of France with the same cowardice; established precedents, rights, or pretensions, authenticated by diplomatic tradition, and even French possessions of long standing, in point of fact, were here in question. It would have ceded much: it dared not cede every thing. The evident intention of a rupture, which England suffered to transpire, rendered the conduct of the government of Louis XV. still more shameful. When this wretched cabinet sacrificed India, it could no longer doubt that it would speedily have war with the English in America;[1] but it had relapsed into the absurd illusion of the neutrality of India, as in the times of La Bourdonnais: the result was destined to be absolutely the same.

Hostilities were well-nigh suspended in Nova Scotia, where the parties held each other in check in the isthmus that separates the peninsula from the dependencies of Canada; but the contest had commenced on the Ohio. Both sides had sent troops and built forts, or rather palisaded retreats, towards the south of the Great Lakes and the Ohio. The French arrested the English merchants, seized several trading-posts, captured a fort from their rivals, and built another, which they called Fort Duquesne, — the name of a new governor of Canada, the grand-nephew of the illustrious admiral. Fort Duquesne, situated between the Ohio and the Alleghany Mountains, was designed to serve as a barrier against the Anglo-Americans who might descend from Pennsylvania and Virginia. The French commander of the Ohio, informed of the approach of an Anglo-American detachment, commissioned an officer named Villiers de Jumonville, at the head of thirty men, to reconnoitre this troop, and summon it to evacuate the French territory. Jumonville was unable to fulfil his commission: one

[1] As early as May 15, 1752, he had *ordered* the Governor of Canada to repel by force the encroachments of the English, if it was necessary, — an order which the Canadians had anticipated three years before.

Digitized by Google

morning he was surprised and suddenly assailed by the English, reënforced by a band of Indians. According to the French accounts, he raised a flag of truce, and even began to read his summons, which did not arrest the fire. The Anglo-American officer affirmed, on the other hand, that he had no knowledge of any attempt to parley. This officer, then very young, and recently appointed colonel of a regiment of Virginia militia, was GEORGE WASHINGTON. It cannot be admitted that the man who bore this name would have rendered himself guilty of a criminal violation of the laws of nations and of humanity; but the disorder of the attack, and the lack of discipline of the militia, may explain every thing. However this may be, Jumonville was killed with nine of his companions, and the rest were taken prisoners (May 18, 1754).

A cry of rage broke forth among the French troops on the Ohio. The commander-in-chief committed the task of vengeance to the brother himself of the victim, M. de Villiers, who marched against Washington with six hundred Canadians and a hundred Indians of the French party. Washington, who had about four hundred men, had just built a palisaded fort on an affluent of the Ohio, — the Monongahela, above Fort Duquesne. He was driven back into his intrenchments, and, after a sanguinary struggle that lasted a whole day, was obliged to capitulate on terms very humiliating to his soldiers (July 3). In the capitulation signed by the two commanders, Captain Villiers declares, that, commissioned to avenge "the *assassination* of a French officer, the bearer of a summons, and his escort, he is pleased to grant pardon to all the English that are in the fort."[1] The English abandoned their fort and artillery, gave hostages as a guarantee of the restitution of the French prisoners, and quitted the disputed territory.

While these events were transpiring on the Ohio, the governors and delegates of the English colonies had assembled at Albany, in the Colony of New York, to concert operations and to concentrate the resources of the different colonies, hitherto administratively isolated from each other. The alliance with the six small Iroquois nations that dwelt between the Lakes and New England was renewed; and a plan of federal union between the thirteen colo-

[1] The original capitulation is in the archives of the marine, with various documents concerning the catastrophe of Jumonville. We owe the communication of this as well as of many other manuscript documents on Canadian affairs to the kindness of M. Pierre Margry, who has long been preparing important publications concerning the history of the French colonies of North America. — See also a letter from Washington of May 29, 1754, ap. *Vie de Washington*, by M. Guizot, t. III. p. 1; and Garneau, *Histoire du Canada*, t. III. pp. 538–540.

Digitized by Google

nies was adopted on the proposition of Dr. Franklin, the delegate from the assembly of Pennsylvania. A president appointed by the crown, and a grand council chosen by the colonial assemblies, were to form the government of the confederation. The idea of the Pennsylvania philosopher was at once premature and incomplete. The American Union was not to be founded under the auspices of constitutional monarchy. The British government rejected a plan which would have rendered the colonies too powerful towards the mother-country; and the colonial assemblies feared, on their side, to put themselves under the jurisdiction of a central administration. The English cabinet preferred carrying on the war with its soldiers and generals, and demanding of the colonies nothing but auxiliaries and money.

England hastened her preparations while continuing to amuse the cabinet of Versailles. New memorials were exchanged in the first months of 1755. England appeared for a moment to relax a little. The French cabinet then proposed the reciprocal evacuation of all the country situated between the Ohio and the Alleghany range. This was a great step backwards. The communication between Louisiana and Canada was reduced to the right bank of the Ohio, and full security was granted to the English frontiers. The English did not deign to take it into consideration, and demanded besides the destruction of the French settlements on the right of the Ohio as far as the Wabash; that of the forts of Niagara and Lake Champlain; the neutrality of the lakes; the cession of all the territory fronting the Nova-Scotian peninsula for twenty miles inland; and the evacuation and neutrality of all the rest of the country south of the St. Lawrence (March 7, 1755). The English government systematically proposed impossible conditions: it believed itself sure of taking Canada in two campaigns, and desired war, as the cabinet of Versailles desired peace, almost at any price.

England was already in a position to act. The people eagerly responded to the appeal of the government. The towns and corporations offered bounties to all who would enlist to serve on sea or land: a lottery, from which the ministry expected £1,000,000, yielded nearly £4,000,000. As early as January, 1755, a squadron set sail from Ireland to convey to Virginia, General Braddock, charged with the execution of a plan of operations devised by the Duke of Cumberland for the conquest of Canada. The vanquished of Fontenoy and the victor of Culloden was the most ardent promoter of the war. The cabinet of Versailles at

Digitized by Google

last determined, in its turn, to permit the departure of a squadron, in April, for the St. Lawrence, with a new governor of Canada, M. de Vaudreuil, and a general officer, M. de Dieskau, together with three thousand soldiers. The French fleet was anticipated by a second English squadron under the command of Admiral Boscawen. The French government demanded explanations: the ministers of George II., the Duke of Newcastle (Pelham), Lord Granville, and Henry Fox, replied that "the English certainly would not begin."[1] They *did begin*, and they were ordered to do so. Boscawen posted himself near the south-east promontory of Newfoundland in order to attack the French squadron on its way. The main body of the squadron passed under cover of a dense fog; but two ships of sixty-four guns, one of which was only partially armed, carrying five hundred troops, fell among the English: they were treacherously surrounded, and captured after a warm resistance (June 8, 1755). At this signal, English privateers were let loose on all the seas. A third and fourth squadron sailed from the British ports to intercept the French ships: before the close of the year, three hundred of our trading-vessels, valued at thirty millions, had been carried into the ports of England, and six thousand of our sailors were languishing in harsh captivity, or saw themselves forced, by want and ill-treatment, to serve against their country. Although the English had more than once been guilty of disloyal surprises on the seas, the civilized world had never yet seen a violation of the law of nations comparable to this gigantic piracy.[2]

Meanwhile Canada was attacked simultaneously at four points by fifteen thousand men, to whom it could only oppose less than seven thousand (two thousand eight hundred regular troops and four thousand militia), without including the garrison of Louisburg. The system of the aggressors had been foreseen, and the defence well planned: it rested, at the south-east, on Fort Duquesne; at the north-east, on the forts of the peninsula of Nova Scotia; at the centre, on Fort Niagara, which commanded the outlet between Lakes Erie and Ontario, and on the abrupt gorges of Lake George, — a position which covered Lake Champlain and the roads to Montreal and Quebec, at the same time that it threatened the Valley of the Hudson and the road to New York. Un-

[1] Flassan, *Hist. de la Diplomatie française*, t. VI. p. 34; Garneau, *Hist. du Canada*, t. II. p. 550.

[2] Sainte-Croix, *Hist. de la Puissance navale de l'Angleterre*, t. II. p. 247; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. — See in the documents the list of the vessels captured.

Digitized by Google

fortunately, the inadequacy of the forces had not permitted all the points to be sufficiently manned. On the side of Nova Scotia, where a population of from fifteen to eighteen thousand souls, of French extraction, asked for nothing but arms to expel the foreigners, not only was it impossible to assume an offensive which would have had decisive results with respect to the safety of Canada, but even to maintain the defensive. Two thousand Anglo-American militia from Boston landed on the shores of the Bay of Fundy, June 1, and, reënforced by three hundred soldiers, took the forts of the isthmus and the coast of the main land, sacked the settlements, and forced the Nova-Scotians that had recently emigrated from the peninsula to take refuge in the interior of Canada or on the islands of the Gulf. Nearly half the Nova-Scotian population (about seven thousand souls) had remained in the peninsula, on English territory; but their sympathies were not doubtful. The English pursued a barbarous course towards these poor creatures: they deported them in a body, and dispersed them through their colonies. This fertile coast remained ruined and depopulated until new English colonists filled up the void left by the ancient inhabitants.

The English were less successful in the rest of their operations. Their commander-in-chief, Braddock, had marched from Virginia on Fort Duquesne at the head of twenty-three hundred men, besides the Indian auxiliaries: he knew that the French had only a handful of soldiers on the Ohio, and pushed forward with such precipitation and confidence as to leave in the rear a thousand men with the heavy baggage. He was ignorant that the French had succeeded in rallying to their cause a part of their old friends, the *red-skins*. July 9, the Anglo-Americans were surprised in the forests of the Monongahela by two hundred and fifty Franco-Canadians and six hundred savages from Fort Duquesne. The English corps, crowded together in a defile and riddled with bullets by almost invisible enemies, was overpowered. General Braddock remained on the battle-field with two thirds of his men. His reserve corps, which was a few leagues in the rear, abandoned baggage and guns, and fled to Pennsylvania, leaving the English frontiers a prey to the ravages of the Canadians and the *red-skins*. An order from the English cabinet to treat the inhabitants of Canada like those of Nova Scotia, and to deport them from their country, was found among the papers of General Braddock!

The contest had not been less sanguinary in the direction of

Digitized by Google

Lake George, — a central point from which a decisive success of the English would have led them to the heart of Canada. Three thousand five hundred Anglo-Americans had set out from the Colony of New York, with a few Iroquois auxiliaries, to seize the defiles of this lake, and to attack Crown Point, on Lake Champlain. They established an intrenched camp at the head of Lake George. The French assumed the offensive. They had three thousand men at this point, including the Indians of their party. Their general, Dieskau made the same mistake as Braddock, and left half of his little army at a distance. The English commander, Johnson, on his side, had divided his forces into several detachments. Twelve hundred English and Iroquois attempted to surprise the French on the march. They were themselves surprised, utterly defeated, and pursued to the camp of Johnson, which Dieskau undertook to enter after them, sword in hand. He lost the victory by seeking to complete it. Part of his men, worn out by their first conflict, had not followed him; and he fell with only seven or eight hundred men on fifteen hundred fresh troops, well intrenched, and well supplied with artillery. He was wounded and taken, and his troops were driven back in disorder (September 8). This repulse had not the same results as that of General Braddock: the French rallied, and maintained themselves on Lake George. The English were forced to be content with keeping their intrenched camp.

Another body of the enemy, of two thousand men, which was to have besieged Niagara, did not even attempt the enterprise, and contented itself with reënforcing the position occupied by the English at Oswego, at the south of Lake Ontario.

The plan of the English against Canada had, therefore, failed at three of the four points attacked. Instead of a rapid invasion, a long and infuriated war was thenceforth in question, and a comparatively trifling assistance from France would have rendered success impossible.[1]

At the news of the piracies committed by the English, the French government had finally recalled its ambassador from London, and had ordered Dunkirk to be fortified on the side of the sea, the usual signal of a rupture: nevertheless, the cabinet of St. James having prescribed the sequestration of the captured ships, which seemed to admit the contingency of a restitution, it was still weak enough to send back an English frigate captured

[1] Garneau, t. III. liv. iv. c. i.; *Vie de Washington*, by M. Guizot, t. III. p. 14; Sainte-Croix, *Puissance navale de l'Angleterre*, t. II. p. 240.

Digitized by Google

by a French frigate, and to suffer the English trading-vessels peacefully to pursue their traffic in our ports. The English responded to these proceedings by taking from us another man-of-war, called the *Espérance*, which, although lightly armed, and carrying only twenty-four guns, heroically defended itself five hours against a ship of seventy-four guns, supported by a whole squadron (November 11).

December 21, the minister of foreign affairs, Rouillé, signified to the English cabinet that "His Most Christian Majesty, before giving way to his resentment, demanded of the King of England satisfaction for all the seizures made by the English marine, as well as the restitution of all vessels, whether of war or commerce, taken from the French; declaring that he should regard the refusal of this as an authentic declaration of war." The English parliament, somewhat shaken at the cry of indignation that had arisen from all parts of Europe against this signal violation of the law of nations, had not dared to take the responsibility of requiring George II. to declare the prizes legitimate. The cabinet of St. James did not decide the question of law; but it refused to release the vessels captured previously to the opening of negotiations (January 13, 1756). The cabinet of Versailles at length resigned itself to the necessity of laying an embargo on the English vessels in our ports (January 23), and of accepting as a fact a war that had been waged against it for a year.[1]

[1] Flassan, t. VI. p. 86; *Journal de Louis XV.* t. II. pp. 108-110.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

LOUIS XV. (Continued).

Seven-Years' War. — The French Navy aroused. Naval Victory of Mahon, and Conquest of Minorca. Defeat of the English in America. Opportunity to repair the Abandonment of India. Fatal Diversion. Madame de Pompadour, gained over by Maria Theresa, plunges France into a Continental War. Alliance with Austria. Conflict between Austria, France, Russia, and Saxony, on the one hand, and England, Prussia, and the House of Brunswick, on the other. Criminal Attempt of Damiens. Fall of Machault and the Count d'Argenson. Insignificance and Obscurity of the Ministers of France. Ministry of Pitt in England. The French in Germany. Victory of Hastenbeck. The Anglo-Hanoverians capitulate at Kloster-Zeven, then violate the Capitulation. Rout of Rosbach. Military Superiority of the Prussians, and Disorganization of the French Army. Exploits and Genius of Frederick II. He is saved by the Intrigues of the Court of Russia. Heroic Defence and Success of the Canadians under Montcalm. Defeat of Crefeld. Loss of Louisburg and Senegal. Loss of Chandernagore. Successes, Mistakes, and Reverses of Lally in India. Loss of the Deccan. Final Ruin of the Plans of Dupleix and Bussi. Ravages of the English on the Coast of France. They are defeated at Saint-Cas. Accession of Choiseul, Prime Minister, in fact, under Madame de Pompadour. Projected Descent on England. Maritime Disasters of Lagos and Croisic. The Navy demoralized like the Army. Loss of Guadeloupe. Defeat and Death of Montcalm. Loss of Quebec. Last Efforts of the Canadians, abandoned by the Mother-country. Last Victory before Quebec. The Canadians, hemmed in by Three Armies, capitulate at Montreal. Admirable Defence of Frederick II. against the Austro-Russians. Ruinous and Inglorious War in Westphalia and Hesse. Financial Distress. Unsuccessful Attempts of Silhouette. Suspension of Payments. Violation of the Public Deposits. Loss of Pondicherry and all French India. Trial and Punishment of Lally. Useless Negotiations with England. Pitt refuses Peace. Loss of Belle-Isle. Family Compact between the Bourbons of France and Spain. Retirement of Pitt. Patriotic Gifts in France for the Revival of the Navy. Frederick II. on the Point of being overpowered. Death of the Czarina Elizabeth. The Czar Peter III. goes over to Prussia. He is dethroned by his Wife, and assassinated in Prison. Accession of Catharine II. She resumes Neutrality. Loss of Martinique. Invasion of Portugal by the Franco-Spaniards. Peace of Paris between France, Spain, and England. Peace of Hubertsburg between Austria, Prussia, and Saxony. France cedes Canada, Louisburg, and Senegal to England, restores Minorca to her, and dismantles Dunkirk anew. France recovers Guadeloupe, Martinique, Gorée, Belle-Isle, and Pondicherry. Spain cedes Florida to the English. France cedes Louisiana to Spain.

1756–1763.

The conflict, scarcely retarded a few months by so much cowardice and folly, had therefore arrived.

Digitized by Google

The inequality of the naval forces was enormous. The French navy, wholly ruined in 1748, had been revived, but in a ratio wholly disproportioned to the formidable masses accumulated in the ports of England. The English had one hundred ships of the line of from fifty to one hundred and twenty guns, sixteen of which were three-deckers of from ninety to one hundred and twenty guns, and seventy-four frigates of from thirty-two to forty-six guns. Their dockyards and arsenals were in the best condition: ours were destitute of ship-timber, masts, rigging, and even artillery. We had only sixty ships of the line and thirty-one frigates. Of the sixty ships, three were not in service, eight were undergoing repairs, four were unfinished on the stocks: of the other forty-five, the greater part needed refitting before putting to sea.[1] Even this number was due only to the fact that Machault, transferred to the marine in 1754, had caused fifteen ships to be rapidly built or finished within a year. Machault, so criminally complaisant or so unenlightened with respect to the affairs of India, aroused himself in the presence of necessity, and showed much decision and vigor. A great number of new vessels were put on the stocks; extraordinary efforts were made to procure supplies; premiums were offered to privateers; and considerable armaments at Brest and Havre, and numerous troops assembled in our ports of the Channel, made the English fear a descent, either on their coasts, or in Jersey or Guernsey. A general panic attested that England, so warlike on the ocean, was still far from being so on its own territory. The English people reassured themselves, as in the times of the invasion of Charles Edward, by calling in foreign mercenaries, — Hanoverians and Hessians. George II. had concluded a subsidy treaty the year before with the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, who had promised to sell him twelve thousand soldiers in case of need. The princes of Hesse, those descendants of heroes, were no longer any thing but traffickers in human flesh.

These threats of a descent on England misled the enemy with respect to the true projects of the French government, advised, it is said, by the aged Noailles. As early as the beginning of the year, small squadrons set sail from Brest for America: one went to defend the Lesser Antilles, where a French frigate of thirty-four guns took an English frigate of fifty-six guns; another posted itself in the waters of St. Domingo; and a third conveyed to Canada a new general, Montcalm, to replace Dieskau, with a feeble

[1] Sainte-Croix, t. II. pp. 249, 490; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 334.

Digitized by Google

reënforcement of fifteen hundred soldiers. Twelve ships of the line remained at Brest. April 10, twelve other ships, commanded by La Galissonière, the Ex-Governor of Canada, set sail from Toulon, escorting one hundred and fifty transports, laden with twelve thousand men, under the command of the Marshal de Richelieu. The expedition made a descent, on the 17th, on the Island of Minorca.

The point of attack was well chosen: it was impossible to deal England a more sensible blow than to capture from her this post, from which she threatened Toulon, and commanded the western basin of the Mediterranean. Port Mahon was a much more formidable offensive position than Gibraltar itself. The choice of the maritime leader was not less worthy of praise: La Galissonière was our best sailor. Public opinion did not accord the same welcome to the name of the general. The procurer of the King, the model seducer, more depraved in proportion as he grew older, no longer obtained from the public the indulgence and species of favor that he had owed too long to his brilliant vices. Despite the renown which Voltaire, bound by long habit to this deplorable friendship, had given to his exploits at Fontenoy and Genoa, little faith was had in his political and military talents. The result, however, did not confirm the apprehensions excited by his name.

The French, having made a descent on the western coast of Minorca, first seized Ciudadela, April 18; then moved on Mahon, the capital of the island. The English evacuated Mahon, and concentrated themselves in Fort St. Philip, an immense citadel commanding the entrance of the arm of the sea which forms Port Mahon. They did not resolve in time to destroy the village of St. Philip, situated under the fort; and the occupation of this hamlet by the French facilitated the approaches, which would have been very long and bloody, had it been necessary to cut the trenches, without cover, in the solid rock. The English government had suffered itself to be surprised. An arrogant confidence in 1755, then an exaggerated fear since the threats of a descent, had prevented it from wintering a squadron in the Mediterranean and reënforcing the garrison of Mahon. Though the citadel was strong and well-provisioned, the garrison was scanty: there were only twenty-five hundred men to defend this vast extent of fortifications. When a squadron of assistance at last appeared, May 19, in the waters of Minorca, the French cannon had already effected a breach in the outworks more than a week before.

On the encounter between the two squadrons was about to

Digitized by Google

depend the fate of the siege. The English fleet, commanded by Admiral Byng, was somewhat superior to the French fleet: it numbered thirteen ships, one of which was very large, against twelve. It opened the attack May 20, having the wind in its favor. The French vanguard, which first closed in with it, was considerably injured. The enemy, however, did not seek to profit by this: his aim was to cut off and overpower the rear-guard in order to advance to the strand of Fort St. Philip. La Galissonière comprehended his adversary's intention, and closed his line so firmly, that it was impossible for the English to break through. The cannonade was not to their advantage: the artillery of the French navy had the same superiority over theirs in firing that their infantry had over ours. Their manœuvres were foiled; and three of their vessels were leaking, and ready to sink. Admiral Byng, judging that a more prolonged contest might end in the destruction of his fleet, effected his retreat. La Galissonière, arrested by contrary winds, and faithful to the instructions which commanded him to subordinate every thing to the success of the siege, was unwilling to leave Port Mahon, and suffered the enemy to regain Gibraltar.

It was already a glorious success to have victoriously sustained a collision with the English on their own element. The land forces, seized with generous emulation, redoubled their ardor in the prosecution of the siege. The garrison of Fort St. Philip, however, was not discouraged: it hoped that the English fleet would return; and was reassured by viewing its deep fosses, its rocks hewn in bastions, its ground undermined, and ready to swallow up the assailants. The siege-works were very laborious, and Richelieu had at first directed them unskilfully. Conscious, nevertheless, that his reputation, his fortune, his all, were at stake, he made great efforts to apply himself to the siege, and to sustain the soldiers. Demoralization beginning to make its way into the camp, and the soldiery indulging too freely in the Spanish wines, Richelieu, instead of punishing them, issued an order, at the instigation of some of the corps commanders, that "any one who became intoxicated should not have the honor of entering the trenches." The idea was a happy one, and all ceased drinking.

Success by the regular process of engineering, nevertheless, seemed still very remote. Richelieu risked a general assault. This was very rash: it was relying greatly on the French soldiers, the first in the world in this sort of warfare! From six to seven weeks of battering had scarcely made an impression on the blocks

Digitized by Google

of rock that formed the outworks of the place; the fosses were not filled up; the walls were standing. During the night of June 27–28, while a large detachment in barks strove to force the entrance of the port, four columns threw themselves into the dry fosse. The cannon and musketry swept away the first ranks; the mines blew up the bottom of the fosse with those who were crossing it; crowds followed in the place of the dead and wounded to avenge them. The ladders were several inches too short: officers and soldiers climbed on each other's shoulders, planted bayonets in the interstices of the stones, and reached the top of the rampart! At daybreak, the English saw with stupefaction the assailants masters of three of the forts. Although the body of the place was intact, the governor determined to capitulate the same day.[1]

The French could scarcely believe in their conquest, on seeing themselves in the midst of all these formidable works, which they could never have scaled in cold blood, by daylight, and without enemies. There was a true intoxication at Paris and throughout France: we had at last worthily replied to the insults of England. Richelieu owed to the valor of our grenadiers a rehabilitation more brilliant than lasting. The true hero of the expedition, La Galissonière, did not enjoy the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen. A prey to an incurable disease, his strength of character had sustained him to the end of the enterprise: he succumbed on his return, and died on the way to Paris. His loss was not repaired.[2]

The joy of France was in proportion to the fury of the English. They had thought that it was only necessary for them to seize their prey, and they saw one of their most precious possessions wrested from them. The popular exasperation was frightful. A victim was needed. The terrified ministers delivered up Admiral Byng, guilty, perhaps, of not having done all that he could, but less guilty in his weakness than they themselves in their negligence. A great suit was commenced against the unhappy admiral, which implicated also the Governor of Gibraltar.

During the siege of Fort St. Philip, the two crowns had at length exchanged declarations of war, very superfluous, and valuable

[1] *Mémoires relatifs à l'expédition de Minorque*, appended to the *Correspondance du maréchal de Richelieu*, t. II. p. 41, *et seq.*; Sainte-Croix, t. II. pp. 252, 444; Smollett, continuation of Hume, b. xxv.; *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 76; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 75.

[2] His humanity equalled his bravery and his ability as an administrator. He had been the first to set the noble example, which was followed by the Bougainvilles, the Cooks, and other illustrious mariners, of propagating in his voyages the vegetables and useful animals of Europe in the islands of the Pacific Ocean. — See L. Guérin, *Hist. maritime de France*, t. II. p. 311.

Digitized by Google

only as manifestoes addressed to Europe. England had commenced May 17: France had replied June 16.

Both sides waited anxiously for news from Canada, which might bring some compensation to the English. The Anglo-American colonies had made numerous levies: the mother-country had sent a general and new troops. More than twenty thousand men threatened Canada, which had scarcely half as many for its defence, the Island of Cape Breton included. The English were simultaneously to attack Lake George, Niagara, and Fort Duquesne, besides making a diversion against the heart of Canada itself. The French succeeded in securing the neutrality of the Iroquois, the masters of the intermediate country; and, in the month of March, a French party captured a post on the frontier of New York, in which the English had accumulated a large quantity of supplies. This loss retarded them greatly. In the beginning of July, their squadron, in turn, captured a French ship of fifty-six guns, which was carrying a reënforcement to the garrison of Louisburg. This advantage was not followed up. The French general, Montcalm, suddenly took the offensive, embarked on Lake Ontario, and made a descent in front of the English post of Oswego, which commanded the southern shore of the lake, and which was the pivot of the enemy's operations. The three forts of Oswego, defended by eighteen hundred men against three thousand, were forced to capitulate at the expiration of four days, almost in sight of two thousand soldiers that were advancing to succor them (August 14). The garrison was taken, with seven brigs-of-war, two hundred transports, more than a hundred and twenty pieces of artillery, and a great quantity of munitions. The French destroyed the forts, to the lively satisfaction of the Iroquois, the original possessors of the country.

The aggressive campaign of the English had utterly failed, and they were forced to guarantee themselves, if not from a regular attack, at least from the devastating incursions of our Canadian hunters and the *red-skins*, who penetrated to the heart of Pennsylvania and Virginia. The brilliant expedition of Oswego had extricated Canada from a very critical position. A bad harvest, and the breaking-out of the small-pox, which assumed a character of extreme malignity, had diffused such distress, that it would have been impossible to have succeeded in provisioning the garrisons of the frontier posts, had it not been for the supplies captured from the English. The great numbers of the unfortunate immi-

Digitized by Google

grants from Nova Scotia redoubled the penury. Canada, wholly victorious as it was, was therefore in more need than ever of aid from the mother-country.

In short, the issue of the campaign in America, as in the Mediterranean, was as fortunate as unexpected to France. French diplomacy had obtained other successes in Europe, which the military successes corroborated. For instance, Holland had appeared at first, according to a too deeply rooted custom, to incline to England: the States-General, interrogated by the French ambassador concerning their intentions, had entreated Louis XV., "through consideration for them, not to extend the war to the shores of England and Ireland;" and the English ambassador had, at the same time, claimed the aid of six thousand men, due from the United Provinces by virtue of treaties. The French government replied to the States, that it should regard as an enemy any one who might attempt to prevent it from employing whatever means it chose for its defence; and added that the English, being the aggressors, had no right to claim the benefit of defensive treaties (February–March, 1756). The stadtholder, William IV., had died in 1751; and his wife, the daughter of George II., was administering in the name of her son, William V., under the title of *governess*. The old republican party, headed by the grand-pensionary of Holland, loudly proclaimed itself in favor of peace. The principal towns, seeing the English lay claim to auxiliary troops, and the French content themselves with neutrality, sided with the republicans and the French; and George II. judged it prudent to abandon his demand, for fear of exciting a revolution fatal to his daughter and grandson.

France recompensed the Dutch by some commercial advantages: England punished them by arbitrary seizures of their ships; then, in consequence of the complaints called forth by these acts of violence, she declared "all the ports of France in a state of blockade, and all vessels bound for these ports subject to seizure as lawful prizes" (August, 1756). The principle of a *fictitious blockade* was the overthrow of all maritime rights, of all neutral rights: it was enunciating the code of piracy after having so fully practised it. Such a system was calculated to turn against England the good wishes and perhaps the arms of every nation that had a navy. As early as July, even before the declaration of the *fictitious blockade*, and on the mere rumor of the acts of violence committed by the English against the Dutch, the two Scandinavian

Digitized by Google

powers had signed a defensive alliance to insure respect to the rights of neutrals, and reparation for the damage done to their navigation.[1]

France responded to the proclamation of the *fictitious blockade* by new progress in the Mediterranean. The eternal Corsican insurrection had commenced anew against the Genoese, this time under the direction of the heroic Pascal Paoli. Genoa greatly desired pecuniary assistance from France. The French government, which knew that the English had not lost sight of Corsica, but were fomenting the insurrection, obliged the Genoese to accept assistance of another kind, and granted them a subsidy of one million two hundred thousand francs a year, only on condition that an indefinite number of French troops were received into the citadels of Calvi, Saint-Fiorenzo, and Ajaccio, for the whole duration of the existing war (August 4, 1756). The French returned to Corsica, November 1, 1756; and France thus found herself mistress, through Toulon, Corsica, and Minorca, of the whole western basin of the Mediterranean.

There was something miraculous in having been able thus to regain the superiority in a contest for which so little preparation had been made, and which had been so badly begun. Providence did not weary of extending a hand to us. In this generous and forgetful nation, the government, that had fallen so low, might yet have retrieved itself, as was attested by the moral effect produced by the conquest of Minorca. The point in question, therefore, was to labor to unite all the maritime nations against the tyrants of the seas; to do every thing, above all, to draw Spain into the conflict; and, whatever might be the success of this, to concentrate all the resources of France against England. The battle of Mahon, and the whole campaign, had shown what the French marine might again become on two conditions: namely, that our principal financial resources were devoted to it; and that the malevolent spirit of the officers of noble birth, who had been promoted from the marine guards, was repressed by severe examples. Brave and well instructed, but imbued with the most insane and culpable prejudices, they disdained the important duty of protecting the merchant-shipping; and some among them carried their ill-will towards officers who had risen from harbor commands, and who were not required to furnish proofs of nobility like the marine

[1] Flassan, t. VI. p. 65; Wenck, t. III. p. 148. The true motive of the English had been to deprive the Dutch of the enormous profits of neutrality, and to prevent them from becoming the factors of the colonies and of French commerce.

Digitized by Google

guards, as far as treason. An iron hand was needed to stifle these germs of discord and disorder; but Machault was not, perhaps, incapable of this part. It was still possible, by applying our efforts exclusively to France, to regain the fortune that had been allowed to escape in India, and to dispute the empire of the seas and of America.

Precisely the contrary was done. We are about to behold an example of madness, of imbecile treason towards one's self, — a parallel to which scarcely exists in history.

The great interest of France was to maintain peace on the continent in order to have her hands free on the sea. The English government, on its side, appeared to seek for nothing else, in its continental alliances, than auxiliary troops and an eventual protection for Hanover. It was with this aim that it had just renewed its treaties with Russia, and had obtained the promise from the latter of the assistance of fifty-five thousand men if Hanover were attacked (September 30, 1755). It was only necessary, therefore, not to carry the war into Germany. No one was in a position to attack France on the continent. Unfortunately, another power thought it to its interest to rekindle the fire in Europe; namely, Austria. The obstinate Maria Theresa was still bent upon vengeance against the King of Prussia. Irritated at having been constrained to peace by England and Holland in 1748, and not less wounded by the dominion, wholly in conformity with the treaties, but very iniquitous at bottom, exercised by the maritime powers over the Austrian Netherlands,[1] she was greatly disgusted with those *heretical* traders, whose alliance had, nevertheless, been the foundation of her safety. Since 1748, she had lent her ear to a bold and able counsellor, who urged her to change the whole system of European relations. The Count von Kaunitz, still young, was what the Marshal de Richelieu imagined himself to be, — a profound politician under the frivolous exterior of a man of fashion. As early as the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, Kaunitz had opened a correspondence with Madame de Pompadour, and had induced the Empress to authorize him to insinuate to the French plenipotentiary that it would be easy to effect a thorough reconciliation between the Houses of Bourbon and Austria; and that Austria would willingly cede Flanders and Brabant, if France would aid her to retake Silesia. Louis XV. was then too weary of war;

[1] The Dutch held military occupation of them, and, in accordance with England, shut them out from the sea, and rendered commerce and manufactures almost impossible.

Digitized by Google

and these seductive offers were not welcomed. Maria Theresa was not discouraged. She renewed her overtures at different times to the diplomatic agents from France to Vienna; then, in 1751, she charged Kaunitz with the French embassy. The insinuating ambassador had little difficulty in gaining the good graces of Madame de Pompadour, who bore ill-will to the enemy of Maria Theresa, the King of Prussia, for some satirical speeches on her and her royal lover. Frederick had an author's self-love in suffering none of his *bon-mots* to be lost; and the caustic wit did great harm in him to the politician. Madame de Pompadour had, besides, another reason for inclining towards Maria Theresa; namely, that the Prince de Conti, who had suggested to the King a secret diplomacy, closed to the favorite as to the ministers, was opposed to Austria. The enterprise of Kaunitz was nevertheless premature. Madame de Pompadour had not yet meddled with the foreign policy. At the first mention of it, she found so much opposition among the ministers, — among her own creatures, — that she dared not speak of it to the King. Kaunitz departed in 1753 to take the head of the Austrian cabinet, and was replaced at Versailles by the Count von Stahremberg, commissioned to pursue the same idea, and to await an opportunity.

Stahremberg thought the opportunity come when news was received of the aggressions of the English against the French marine. He formally offered the Austrian alliance to the cabinet of Versailles. A contradictory offer was made at the same time by the Prussian ambassador, Knyphausen. Frederick II. proposed to France to unite with him against England and Austria; the French invading Belgium, and the Prussians Bohemia. This important question was propounded before the council. The Count d'Argenson supported the propositions of the King of Prussia, and maintained, that in the reciprocal disposition of Frederick and Maria Theresa, a continental war being inevitable, the Prussian alliance was worth more than the Austrian. The maintenance of all our diplomatic traditions, and the personal superiority of Frederick over the Austrian generals, left no room for hesitation. He would have been right, had war been inevitable; but it was not so, at least not immediately, as was demonstrated by Machault, who protested against any offensive alliance on the continent. This discussion was at the bottom nothing but the continuation of the rivalry between the ministers of war and the marine, each one advocating the kind of warfare which would give him the preponderance; but Machault defended the public interest in defend-

Digitized by Google

ing the interest of his ambition. The King wavered. The Prince de Conti exerted a weighty influence on him in one direction: Madame de Pompadour acted as yet only with a certain timidity in the opposite one. Machault prevailed at first, but only partially: that is, an offensive alliance, both with Austria against Prussia, and with Prussia against Austria, was averted, but without renouncing the idea of carrying the war into Hanover, the invasion of which, it was said, would induce King George to capitulate concerning the maritime interests. It was knowing England very little to entertain such a hope. The alliance of Frederick was therefore accepted, but with the proviso that he should second France against England in Hanover, while France did not pledge herself to unite with him against Austria. This was treating him like a *condottiere* in our pay. It was radically absurd. If a great continental war was not desired, Hanover should have been let alone. Here, as almost everywhere, nothing could have been worse than half-way measures.

Austrian perseverance did not belie itself. Before the end of the summer of 1755, Stahremberg returned to the charge, and announced that his court had refused to England the auxiliary troops which she claimed by virtue of treaties. This fact produced a lively impression. About the same time, the pious and chaste Maria Theresa wrote with her own hand to the mistress of Louis XV., calling her *my cousin*, and loading her with flatteries. We can measure by the effort imposed on herself by the proud daughter of the Hapsburgs the depth and violence of her resentment against Frederick. Madame de Pompadour's head was completely turned; and she devoted herself unreservedly to *her friend*, who indemnified her so gloriously for the contempt of the King of Prussia. Maria Theresa had hesitated which to address of the two great influences that disputed the King, — the Prince de Conti or the *Marchioness*. Kaunitz had turned the scale.

Madame de Pompadour found it much easier than she had hoped to broach the affair to the King, if not to conclude it. Louis had not only with respect to Frederick the jealousy of a petty and conceited mind against genius, but the hatred of the bigot against the infidel. The idea of a great Catholic alliance singularly flattered him, and readily effaced from his mind the plans of the Prince de Conti, which he had seemed to adopt through conviction. To quit that system of heretical alliance founded by Richelieu, and to overthrow the Protestant party represented by England and Prussia, appeared to him a work capable of redeeming

Digitized by Google

all his sins, past and future. Louis XIV., at least, had not revoked the Edict of Nantes until after his *conversion;* but Louis XV. invented for himself another code of morals. He was persuaded that a King who sustained the cause of the Church could not be damned for his private sins. He dreamed of a religious war from the recesses of the Parc-aux-Cerfs![1]

Louis commissioned, not one of his ministers, but an intimate confidant of Madame de Pompadour, to confer secretly with the Austrian ambassador. This was the Abbé de Bernis, an elegant and facile wit, who had attained to high posts through well-turned verses and boudoir successes, and who, after at first opposing through good sense the Austrian inclination of his protectress, served this inclination through complaisance and ambition. The policy of Europe was discussed between Bernis, Stahremberg, and Madame de Pompadour, in a pleasure-house of the Marchioness, called Babiole[2] (the Bauble); a name well chosen for the scene of this intrigue, where the vanity of a courtezan disposed of the fate of Europe! (September 22, 1755.)

Contrary to her custom, Austria acted frankly. Stahremberg gave at once the ultimatum of his sovereign. It was a vast and daring plan. Europe was to be reconstructed. Austria was to recover the Duchy of Parma, and to cede Belgium in exchange to the Infant, Don Philip, with the exception of the town of Mons, which was ceded to France. Luxemburg, the *Gibraltar of Belgium*, was to be dismantled. The crown of Poland (conformably to the plan of the Marquis d'Argenson) was to be rendered hereditary in the House of Saxony, while maintaining the Polish liberties in all other respects. Austria was to recover Silesia. Pomerania was to be restored to Sweden. Austria was forever to renounce the English alliance. France, having a first-class power for an ally, would no longer find it necessary to exhaust her finances to keep petty States, covetous and insecure auxiliaries, in her pay; and would have nothing more to fear on the continent. France,

[1] Saint-Priest, *Études historiques sur le dix-huitième siècle; De la Destruction des Jésuites*, from the papers of the Duke de Choiseul; Duclos, *Mém. secrets*, ap. *Collect. Michaud et Poujoulat*, 3d series, t. X. p. 635. Duclos, the intimate friend of the Cardinal de Bernis, and historiographer of France, was well acquainted with all this negotiation. Soulavie, *Mémoires de Richelieu*, t. IX. p. 70.

[2] Babiole was situated below the beautiful residence of Madame de Pompadour, on the eminence of Bellevue. The Cardinal de Brienne, the minister of Louis XVI., confirms Duclos' testimony concerning every thing with respect to Bernis. — See his *Notice sur Bernis*, appended to the *Mémoires* of Madame du Hausset.

Digitized by Google

Austria, and Spain, leagued together, would dictate the law to Europe.

Bernis, dismayed at the responsibility that weighed upon him, himself entreated the King to communicate these specious and dangerous propositions to the council. The whole council was not convoked: the Count d'Argenson was excluded, as the partisan of Prussia, with other ministers of State (October, 1755). Expurgated as it was, the council recoiled before this diplomatic revolution. Machault had not changed his opinion, and the King relapsed into indecision before the objections of the ministers. A dilatory answer was made: then Bernis, returning to his first sentiments, caused a simple treaty of guarantee between France, Austria, and Prussia, for their European possessions, to be sent to the Empress as a counter plan, the existing war being excepted from the defensive project. France was to remain free to act against Hanover. An ambassador was sent to Frederick to induce him to accede to this plan.

This was very good, but as far as possible from the views of Maria Theresa. She was greatly dissatisfied; but she was determined not to be rebuffed. She suffered herself, it is said, to be persuaded by degrees not to reject this compact, at least as a starting-point: she saw in it a guarantee against a Franco-Prussian attack, and was sure that Frederick would furnish her some pretext for breaking off the engagement concerning him. Duclos asserts that an order was about to be given to Stahremberg to sign the agreement, when important news effected a fatal change in every thing.

The King of England, abandoned by Austria, had understood the necessity of forgetting his resentment against his nephew of Prussia, who had formerly accused him of *deserving the galleys*.[1] George II. had proposed to Frederick, through the medium of the Duke of Brunswick, a defensive compact for the peace of Germany, or, in other terms, for the protection of Hanover. Frederick found himself in great perplexity. He had been unable to obtain the offensive alliance of France against Austria, an alliance which would have given him fine opportunities. If he accepted the propositions of the cabinet of Versailles, he rendered himself its instrument against Hanover, gained nothing thereby, and risked having Austria and Russia on his hands: by accepting the offers of England, there was a chance that the French would forbear to

[1] See *ante*, p. 313. Frederick, by way of compensation, in his History of the Seven-Years' War, gravely eulogizes the *heroic virtues* of his uncle.

Digitized by Google

attack Hanover; and, in any case, he believed himself guaranteed against Russia, which, allied to England, would not attack the ally of the latter; and, Russia becoming friendly, Austria would not probably dare to seek a quarrel with him. He did not doubt that Russia, between her two allies, Austria and England, would prefer the one that paid. He decided: January 19, 1756, the Prussian agent at London signed a defensive treaty with the ministers of George II., as the Elector of Hanover, against "any foreign power that might introduce troops into Germany."[1] Frederick did not seek to make this engagement a secret to France, and protested against all idea of hostility. He only wished, he said, to preserve Germany from war.[2]

Frederick spoke the truth; but Louis XV. was as much offended at his defection as if the Elector of Brandenburg had been the rebellious vassal of the King of France. This degraded soul blended two contradictory vices, — pride and cowardly thoughtlessness. The court of Vienna seized the occasion. It declared that the projected treaty presented by France was no longer possible, and demanded a defensive compact against the King of Prussia. The King and Madame de Pompadour no longer thought this sufficient, and, in their warlike ardor, desired an offensive alliance! Bernis moderated them, and, commissioned by the King to draw up the conditions, persuaded him, this time, to consult the whole council. D'Argenson and Machault again disputed the ground, inch by inch, in the council: they succumbed, and the fatal treaty of Versailles was signed May 1, 1756.

It consisted of two separate agreements: 1st, The Empress-Queen pledged herself to neutrality in the existing differences between France and England; 2d, The Empress-Queen and the King of France guaranteed to each other their possessions in Europe, and promised a mutual aid of twenty-four thousand men against all aggressors. The existing war against England was excepted by Austria: France claimed no exception, not even in the event of war between Austria and Turkey; an exception which England had been wise enough to make in her treaties with Austria. This

[1] Wenck, *Codex Juris gentium*, t. III. p. 84. It is expressly stipulated that Germany alone is in question, and not the Austrian Netherlands.

[2] M. Capefigue, in his volume on Madame de Pompadour, cites an offensive compact of Frederick with England against France, as having rendered necessary the Austrian alliance of 1756. The treaty from which he gives an extract is not, as he affirms, that of January, 1756, but an agreement of January 11, 1757, the effect and not the cause of the deplorable treaty of France with Austria. — See Garden, *Hist. des Traités de paix*, t. IV. p. 30.

Digitized by Google

omission, if not repaired, was the annihilation of all our policy and all our influence in the Levant. As to the immediate meaning of the treaty, it consisted in this: that Austria only pledged herself not to assist England against France, and that France pledged herself to assist Austria with twenty-four thousand men against Prussia, in case of need. By secret articles, however, the pledge of assistance became reciprocal, if, by occasion of the existing war, other powers than England should attack the European possessions either of France or Austria. It was agreed to invite the Emperor, as the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Kings of Spain and Naples, and the Duke of Parma, to accede to the treaty. The parties were to act in concert in all contingencies not foreseen at Aix-la-Chapelle, especially "concerning whatever regarded the repose of Italy." This pledged France much farther: in the idea of Austria, however, it was only a first step. The national and traditional policy of France, which had been for the first time systematically overthrown by the Cardinal Dubois, and which the Chauvelins, the D'Argensons, and the Contis, had sought to revive, was about to be blindly subverted a second time by Madame de Pompadour, and with consequences far more disastrous.[1]

The Prince de Conti, without whose knowledge the whole negotiation had been conducted, understood that his system was at an end,[2] and that the treaty of Versailles, rigorously tenable in the existing terms, would be only a starting-point. He returned to the King's hands the superintendence of the secret correspondence, and ceased all participation in public affairs. The fruit of ten years of labor was utterly lost just as Turkey and Sweden had been won over to the true French policy, and our influence had regained the ascendency in the Polish diets. The secret diplomacy did not disappear with the man who had organized it: these mysterious proceedings were too well suited to the distrustful and dissimulating mind of Louis XV.; and, strange to say, this secrecy, which seemed fitted to cover nothing but contemptible intrigues, continued to shelter honorable designs. The two Broglies, uncle and nephew, succeeded to Conti's views as to his office; but their intentions were as powerless as his. Louis XV., fully warned by enlightened and sincere agents, bears the respon-

[1] See the treaty in Wenck, t. III. p. 141; and Garden, *Hist. des traités de paix*, t. IV. p. 19; Frederick II., *Hist. de la guerre de Sept Ans*, t. I. c. iii.; Coxe, *Hist. de la maison d'Autriche*, c. cx.

[2] See *ante*, p. 408; and Ségur, *Politique de l'Europe*, t. I. p. 61.

Digitized by Google

siblity before history of having done wrong, or suffered it to be done, with full knowledge of the case.

The treaty of Versailles was not long in bearing its first-fruits. Austria, sure of France, had labored with the same success to win Russia. Frederick had been mistaken in his calculations. Austria, too poor to offer subsidies and to keep Russia in her pay, was rich enough to buy the Russian ministers; and Maria Theresa employed a still more effective weapon. Frederick had not spared the Czarina any more than Louis XV. and his mistress; and the court of Vienna had caused the sarcasms which he had let fall concerning the numerous amours of her Muscovite Majesty to reach the ears of Elizabeth. The Prussian monarch, however, should have been silent on the point of morals. The Czarina was incensed to such a degree, that the mere fact of an alliance between England and Prussia sufficed to make her break off her engagements with England. She concluded a secret treaty with Austria and Saxony for the partition of Prussia. The biting tongue of Frederick had also alienated Saxony from him by offending the Count de Brühl, the favorite of Augustus III. Never had a greater war more paltry motives. The treaty against Prussia was only contingent in the event that Frederick should give rise to hostilities; but the court of Vienna relied on finding means to transform this contingency into fact.

The treaty of France and Austria had been rendered public. Frederick detected the secret of the other compact by corrupting a clerk of the cabinet of Saxony. It was now evident to him that Austrian diplomacy would attain its ends, and precipitate upon him in the coming spring, under some pretext, a formidable coalition. He examined the situation with a firm glance. His enemies were not ready. Austria alone, which had greatly improved its finances and military status since 1748, and which had already more than sixty thousand soldiers assembled in Bohemia, was able to take the field. Russia would not be in a condition to act before the spring of 1757. Saxony, ruled by frivolous luxury and improvidence, needed six months at least to put itself on a war-footing. Frederick, on his side, was ready. The population of his States had more than doubled since his accession, thanks to his conquests and to the improvements which Prussia owed to him;[1] his finances were in a good condition; his army

[1] Frederick had encouraged agriculture and manufactures, reformed the laws by a code designed to throw light upon and abridge legal proceedings, and, above all,

Digitized by Google

was complete, and improved, as to tactics, by the exercises of a laborious peace.[1] He judged, that, with the extreme inequality of the forces, he had but a single chance of safety; namely, to be the first to strike, to choose the theatre of war, and to reduce the resources of his enemies as much as possible by the vigor of his first blows. He did not hesitate as to the point of attack: it could be nowhere but Saxony, the strategical and geographical centre of Germany, which would cover Brandenburg, and open Bohemia. He began by plainly demanding of Maria Theresa the assurance that he would not be attacked by her or her allies that year or the year following. The Empress-Queen refused to give this promise. On the negative answer of Vienna, Frederick entered Saxony with more than sixty thousand Prussians: Field-Marshal Schwerin entered Bohemia by the way of Königgrätz with thirty thousand more (the end of August).

The Elector-King, Augustus III., threw himself into the intrenched camp at Pirna, between Dresden and the frontier of Bohemia, with about seventeen thousand men, who composed, at that moment, his whole army. This camp was a kind of great natural fortress, more than thirty miles in circumference, surrounded by the Elbe, ledges of rocks, and marshy ravines. Frederick, the master of Dresden without striking a blow, ordered forty thousand troops to besiege the camp of Pirna, and with the rest of his forces marched into Bohemia to meet Field-Marshal Braun, who was advancing at the head of the principal Austrian army corps to liberate the Saxons: another Austrian corps confronted Schwerin. Frederick, greatly inferior in numbers, attacked Braun, October 1, at Lobositz, forced him back beyond the Eger, and commissioned one of his lieutenants to hold him in check; then hastened to rejoin the army that was besieging Pirna. Braun, nevertheless, effected an entrance into Saxony with a strong detachment by the right bank of the Elbe. The Saxons issued from the camp of Pirna, and endeavored to cut their way to the Austrians; but their leaders were so little acquainted with their own country, that they strayed into defiles where the Prussians took them as if in a snare. Fifteen thousand men laid down their arms, and were

reformed the extreme corruption of the Prussian magistracy. — See *Hist. de la guerre de Sept Ans*, t. I. ch. i.

[1] He had nearly one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers to a population of five million souls; a proportion which would give more than a million soldiers to France at the present day. The low price of commodities, and the extreme economy of the Prussian government, alone can explain how this little State lived and prospered under so enormous a burden.

Digitized by Google

incorporated into the Prussian army, according to the hazardous custom of Frederick (October 18). No other terms were granted to King Augustus than liberty to retire to Poland, where he obtained no assistance from the Polish Diet, which was unwilling to interfere in the war of Germany. The Austrians withdrew, and Frederick took up his winter-quarters on the confines of Saxony and Bohemia.[1]

At the moment when Frederick gloriously opened the continental war, a change, very happy for him and very threatening to France, was effected in England.

Hitherto, England had found an insufficient instrument for her ambition and hatreds in her government. Public opinion, both in the mother-country and in the colonies, seconded by a very influential prince of the blood, the Duke of Cumberland, had determined on the war; but the ministry had not known how to direct it. The same contrast as in France, although in a less degree, was manifested between the government and the nation. Effeminacy, tameness, and careless selfishness, were found everywhere in the administration, even among the leaders of the army and the fleet. Of the two brothers Pelham, the heads of the cabinet in 1748, the more capable, Henry, was dead; and the other, the Duke of Newcastle, as well as the rest of the members of the ministry, were inferior to the nation and the situation.

But England had means, in which France was lacking, to impose her men and her wishes on the government. The man whom she needed she possessed and recognized: it was the orator whose thundering eloquence had formerly overthrown Walpole, and who had since ruled the parliament, and had been many times on the verge of the power which the personal antipathy of George II. had not permitted him fully to seize. The King was at last constrained to yield to the torrent of public opinion, and to submit to the tribune whose exclusive patriotism had so often rudely shocked the German tastes of the House of Hanover. William Pitt received, or rather took forcible possession of, the ministry in October, 1756.

Between Walpole and Pitt there seemed the distance of centuries. These two men appeared to belong to different worlds. It was the civism of the antique republics after parliamentary corruption. No one in modern ages has as yet, to such a degree, resembled antiquity both in form and in substance; not, however, entire

[1] Frederick II., *Hist. de la guerre de Sept Ans*, t. I. ch. iv. — See, concerning this campaign, the criticisms of Napoleon, in his *Mémoires*, t. VII. p. 161, 2d edition.

Digitized by Google

antiquity, not philosophical antiquity, but political antiquity. Virtue, in William Pitt, was not the philosophical virtue of Epictetus and Aristides any more than Christian virtue. He would not have been called the *Just*. His was the virtue of the Roman conquerors,—devotion to his country; the greatness of his country pursued by all means, without reservation either of the rights of foreigners or of those of humanity. *Hospes hostis!* The famous saying that is attributed to him, whether authentic or not, clearly sums up his idea: "If we were just to the French, we should not exist thirty years longer."[1]

He had seen the maritime and colonial uprising of the French nation, and had comprehended, that, if France should join to her indestructible continental resources the preponderance in America and India, England would relapse into the rank of second-rate powers. He hated France as the Romans hated Carthage, and his accession was the signal for war to the death.

The conflict between a government directed by such a man and the government of Louis XV. was, in reality, the conflict between an aristocratic republic and an absolute monarchy; and the latter government is much weaker and less persevering than the other, even when it is not in its decline. The conflict had already assumed the same character at the close of the reign of Louis XIV., and the Great King had succumbed. Where Cyrus had failed, what could Sardanapalus do? William Pitt before Louis XV. was a Roman consul before an effeminate monarch of the East!

Under this iron hand, England changed aspect in a few months. Pitt had blushed for his country at the shameful terror expressed by the English nation as soon as it thought itself menaced in its island by a few thousand soldiers. He wished to inure England to war, both against the danger and the fear of a descent: by the institution of a militia, he restored arms to this people, who had forgotten their use. A handful of half-savage insurgents had lately been near subjugating England, who had avenged herself on them with the ferocity of offended pride: by reparative measures, William Pitt reconciled to his government the remnants of the Scotch Highlanders, and sent two or three thousand of these intrepid men to swell the Anglo-American forces opposed to Canada. Squadrons were sent out in all directions. Parliament voted an appropriation for fifty-five thousand men for the naval service, and for nearly fifty thousand for the land service, and

[1] Rainal, *Hist. philosophique des deux Indes*, t. IV. liv. ii.

Digitized by Google

granted a tax of £8,000,000 for the year 1757. The civil and military posts were expurgated with inflexible rigor. A bloody example was made, to place the leaders of the English armies between victory and death. Admiral Byng, condemned to death by a court-martial for not having done all that he could to save Minorca, but recommended by his judges to the clemency of the King, was pitilessly shot (March 14, 1757). Voltaire, who was beginning to attribute to himself on all occasions the official character of the defender of humanity which was to do honor to his old age, had appealed in vain to the public opinion of Europe, and even to the testimony of the French captains who had fought against Byng. This coldly calculated punishment is marked with a much more cruel character than those executions of generals after the French Revolution, justly censured, and explained by the passions and mortal suspicions of that terrible epoch. Byng, on his side, had been in no wise suspected of treason.[1]

The government of Louis XV. was, later, to imitate Pitt in his cruelty, but not in his genius. At present, on the contrary, it left officers unpunished far more criminal than Byng. We have already spoken of the arrogant disdain of the sailors of noble birth for the port officers or *officiers bleus*. In a battle fought off the coast of the Island of Cape Breton, in July, 1756, the captain of a ship and the captain of a frigate had abandoned their commodore, who, attacked by two English ships stronger than his own, would have succumbed, had it not been for the aid of another frigate. The only motive for this cowardly treachery was that the commodore was a *plebeian*. The frigate captain did not await a trial: unable to resist his remorse and the contempt of honorable men, he hung himself. The other officer was acquitted by a council of war, whom the spirit of fraternity rendered unfaithful to all its duties. Events less infamous, but still very culpable, transpired on the coasts of France and in the West Indies, which may be summed up in the extreme negligence of the officers of noble birth in protecting the merchant convoys intrusted to them. The little value that they set on a mission which they esteemed beneath them had cost France dear: in 1756, two hundred merchant-ships and barks had been captured by the English.[2]

The only statesman who had firmness enough to reëstablish order, and repress this detestable spirit, had already quitted public

[1] See *Lord Chatham*, by M. de Viel-Castel, ap. *Revue des deux Mondes*, fourteenth year, new series, t. V. pp. 717–808; 1844.

[2] *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. pp. 87–93.

Digitized by Google

affairs. Machault had been overthrown by a court intrigue; and, to speak truly, there was no longer any administration of the marine among us.

While the first politicians of the epoch, William Pitt and Frederick the Great, united for a desperate struggle against France, Louis XV., his court, and his council, occupied themselves less with foreign war than with intestine quarrels worthy of the Lower Empire.

The government had vainly renounced the financial reforms proposed by Machault, in order to put an end to the strife of the *certificates of confession*. The most ardent portion of the clergy, led by the Archbishop of Paris, had considered the agreement concluded between the ministry and the Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld, the president of the assembly of the clergy, as a kind of simony. This agreement had not been respected for a moment; and the refusals of the sacraments, and consequently the decrees of the parliaments, had begun anew as early as the autumn of 1754. The court, this time, took part against the churchmen; and several prelates, including the Archbishop of Paris himself, were exiled to their country-houses. The parliament of Paris inflicted a less benign exile on a curé and some parish priests, whom it condemned, as seditious persons, to perpetual banishment. It attempted to push its advantage, and to take the offensive against the Bull *Unigenitus*. A decree of March 18, 1755, appealing to the parliament from the ecclesiastical court, as having exceeded its jurisdiction with respect to the execution of the Bull, "especially in so far as any ecclesiastics pretend to attribute to it the character of a rule of faith," was received by the attorney-general. The council, as was to be expected, quashed the decree of the parliament, which continued its contention with the Sorbonne and with the assembly of the clergy, convened from May to October, 1755.[1] The death of the fanatical Boyer, the holder of the list of benefices (August 20, 1755), somewhat appeased the strife of the certificates of confession: this species of ministry of ecclesiastical affairs passed into the hands of the Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld, a man of a conciliatory spirit, and opposed to scandal; and violence ceased to be a recommendation to benefices: thenceforth there were fewer violent men in the clergy.

The Archbishop of Paris, however, and the vehement and sincere portion of the Molinist party, did not capitulate. A new

[1] This assembly at least kept its word to the government as to the pecuniary question, and granted it a gratuity of fifteen millions.

Digitized by Google

diversion, moreover, occurred to cause the suspension of the strife of the certificates of confession, and to avenge the clergy on the parliament by putting the magistracy at variance with the court. In consequence of a conflict of jurisdiction between the parliament of Paris and the great council, that singular tribunal whose powers were simply exceptional, and which had neither province nor jurisdiction, a royal declaration ordered that the decrees of the great council should be executive with respect to the inferior tribunals throughout the kingdom, as were those of the parliaments in their jurisdictions (October 10, 1755). All the parliaments addressed warm remonstrances to the King against this invasion of their prerogatives. The great council and the parliaments waged a warfare of decrees several months; the majority of the inferior tribunals refused to register the decrees of the great council: some bailiwicks having received them, the parliament of Paris caused them to be stricken from their registers. February 18, 1756, it convoked the princes of the blood and the peers to take their places in its midst, "to devise means of maintaining the hierarchic order and the police of the kingdom against the indecent enterprises of the great council." The King forbade the princes and the peers to repair to the Palais: they obeyed, but presented to Louis XV., through the Duke of Orleans, a protest in the form of a petition. The Duke of Orleans, the grandson of the Regent, a man of pleasure and of inconsistent character, affected philosophical and innovating tendencies, in imitation of the Prince de Conti.[1] Louis XV. threw the petition into the fire.

The ferment was not less violent among the provincial magistracy. The parliaments of Rouen and Bordeaux, above all, obstinately resisted the King: several of their members were exiled, and they suspended the course of justice. The parliament of Paris made earnest efforts in their favor. It showed itself more and more animated: its struggle with the great council did not divert it from its other enemies. A decree of May 18, 1756, quashed the decree of the Sorbonne, which, in 1729, had received the Bull *Unigenitus*, and instituted a formula which candidates for the degrees were forced to sign. The decree of the parliament was, as usual, quashed by the council of State. Ere long, the question of taxes gave rise to still warmer discussions. As early as 1755,

[1] During the interval, he caused his son, who was afterwards *Philippe Égalité*, and his three daughters, to be inoculated with the small-pox by the celebrated physician, Tronchin, of Geneva.

Digitized by Google

despite the increase of the indirect taxes[1] and the recent institution of the *twentieth*, it had been necessary to make use of all kinds of expedients to provide for the preparations for war. Very large sums had been attracted to the coffers of the State, under the title of securities, by different renewals of leases outside of the general farms,[2] and by the reconstruction of the system of the farms. The number of farmers-general had been increased from forty to sixty by abolishing the under-farms, in order to compel the company to increase their security forty millions (these securities were, in fact, a sort of loan at four per cent). A lottery had been created with a capital of thirty-two millions, bearing three million eight hundred thousand francs interest a year during twelve years. By all these means, an extraordinary fund of one hundred and six millions had been procured, without counting the fifteen millions of the clergy. This fund was consumed, and it was no longer possible to have recourse to the same proceedings; and an increase of the taxes again became necessary. The villain-tax and the capitation-tax were increased four millions; and it was determined to present for registration a number of edicts for the raising of extraordinary taxes (July 7, 1756): these were a second twentieth in addition to the first of Machault, which second twentieth was to cease on the recurrence of peace; the prolongation, for ten years, of the two sous per livre on the ancient income tithe of 1746, which had survived the original tax, and which was given as a guarantee for the emission of one million eight hundred thousand francs of *rentes;* the prolongation of divers temporary duties and taxes which were approaching their expiration; the establishment of a new duty, valued at three millions a year, on the wood and coal consumed in Paris, which was alienated for seven years; and the exaction from the towns of a gratuity for six years, payable by means of a new *octroi*, to which all persons were to be subject without distinction.[3]

[1] The lease of the farms had just been raised to one hundred and ten millions. It had more than doubled since the Regency: in 1718, it yielded only forty-eight million five hundred thousand francs.

[2] The mails, which yielded more than six millions a year; the paulette (an annual duty paid by the magistrates), more than two millions; the bank of Sceaux and Poissi, established in 1744, and renewed for twelve years in 1755, in consideration of fifteen millions in ready money, etc.— See *Collection de comptes rendus concernant les finances de* 1758 à 1787; Lausanne, 1788, 4to, pp. 19–23.

[3] *Comptes rendus concernant les finances de la France de* 1758 à 1787; *état des finances en* 1758; Lausanne, 1788, 4to. — Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 136. The ecclesiastics, nevertheless, obtained an exemption from this *octroi* for the products of their benefices destined for their consumption.

Digitized by Google

The parliament presented remonstrance after remonstrance instead of registering these edicts. The King, compelled to act authoritatively, summoned the parliament to Versailles for a bed of justice (August 21, 1756). The registration took place in silence: the parliament had resolved in advance not to give an opinion, in order not to sanction this act of *plenary power* by the semblance of deliberation. On the very next day but one, it began again to protest, and was seconded not only by the provincial parliaments, which refused to make the registration, but by the other superior courts at Paris, the chamber of accounts, and the court of aids, who made the registration only by the express command of the King, and under protest. The remonstrances of all these courts are very remarkable: the free and sharp tone, the eloquence devoid of all pedantry, if not of all declamation, show men that had read the *Spirit of Laws*, and had profited by it in the traditional point of view. They unsparingly attack the *pernicious design* of establishing *arbitrary government*, and continually appeal from it to fundamental and immutable laws, and to hallowed and necessary forms; they treat the decrees of the council as acts which are worthy of respect in nothing but the august name with which they have been invested by mistake. "What citizen," they exclaim, "can henceforth resolve to enter the magistracy? None but slaves are required there!" The parliament of Paris advances the principle that all the parliaments of France are only the same body, simply divided into *classes;* or, in other terms, that there is but a single parliament, of which the princes and the peers are members, and of which the superior courts are only extensions, and, so to speak, colonies.[1]

The appearance of the *system of classes* greatly excited the court: it savored of the Fronde, and this great confederation of the magistracy might go very far. Nevertheless, in fact, the immediate consequences of the parliamentary demonstrations were not what the court had to fear. However suffering and disaffected were the people, they did not attempt to evade the payment of the

[1] See the remonstrances of the parliaments of Rouen, Paris, and Toulouse, in the *Mercure historique et politique*, the Hague, t. CXLI. pp. 184, 467, 603. All speak with the same vehemence of the misery of the people, and their condition, "a thousand times more intolerable than that of the slaves of America." — *Ibid.* p. 607. The parliament of Toulouse strongly attacks the obligation to road labor (the *corvée*) in particular, which, it said, was consummating the ruin of agriculture. Languedoc proper had redeemed itself from this, meanwhile. At the same time, the parliament of Toulouse protests against the levy of the *twentieths* on the lands of the nobles, as destructive of feudal right. — *Ibid.* t. CXLII. p. 47.

Digitized by Google

taxes which, they were told, were needed to oppose the English. The conquest of Mahon had much to do with their docility. If they were not disobedient, the provinces were none the less agitated; and the violence of a part of the clergy kept up the ferment at Paris and in a number of the dioceses. The Archbishop of Paris had issued a mandate from his exile at Conflans, in which he excommunicated the judges who might give decrees to constrain the ministers of the Church with respect to the sacraments, and, with the judges, the priests who might obey the judges, the believers who might read the extracts from the registers of the parliament, etc. A score of bishops imitated the fiery Beaumont. The parliament burned the mandates, and the King exiled several prelates, this time, beyond their dioceses. Pope Benedict XIV., to whom the assembly of the clergy had referred the matter, with the King's consent, attempted, meanwhile, to restore peace to the Church of France by a brief, in which he exhorted the bishops to refuse the sacraments only to persons *notoriously refractory* (October 16, 1756). This conciliatory intervention on the part of the Holy See is somewhat worthy of notice; but it must be remembered that it came from a pope who corresponded with Voltaire and Frederick II. As too often happens, the peacemaker was ungraciously received by both parties: the Molinist fanatics accused him of Jansenism; and the parliament, laying more stress on the form than the intention of the interference, set aside his brief, although the King himself had transmitted it to the bishops.

The King, whom all this noise disturbed in his pleasures, was half impatient, half terrified. He felt the worn springs of the monarchy giving way under these continual shocks. "These great lawyers and the clergy," he said one day to Madame de Pompadour, "distress me with their quarrels; but I detest the lawyers much more of the two: my clergy, at the bottom, are attached and faithful to me; the others wish to hold me in tutelage. The Regent was very wrong in restoring them the right of remonstrance: they will end by destroying the State. . . . They are an assembly of republicans!" The conclusion was characteristic, and worthy of the speaker: "Well, well, enough of this: things as they are will last as long as I!"[1]

The King and the father were on a par with each other in Louis XV!

He decided, however, on a great stroke, through spite rather than through serious resolution. December 13, 1756, he carried two

[1] *Mém. de madame du Hausset* (an ear-witness), p. 72.

Digitized by Google

declarations to the parliament in a bed of justice. The first, concerning the affairs of the Church, sought to establish a medium between the two parties: the Bull *Unigenitus* was to be respected, although it was not a *rule of faith*. The *silence* prescribed by the prior declarations was not to be prejudicial to the right possessed by the bishops to teach the ecclesiastics and the people; but the bishops were to avoid every thing that could disturb the public tranquillity. All civil cases concerning the refusal of the sacraments were to be carried before the judges of the Church: the royal courts and judges could not order the sacraments to be administered, but could only prosecute the ecclesiastics that had refused the sacraments to others than persons publicly and notoriously refractory. All that had been done with respect to the late troubles was to be buried in oblivion: all decrees, sentences, and judgments, etc., were annulled. The second declaration exclusively attributed to the great chamber of the parliament all that concerned the general police in civil and ecclesiastical matters, unless the great chamber itself should decide to assemble the chambers. The parliament was to present its remonstrances to the edicts sent to it within a fortnight, and to register them on the day after the King's answer to the remonstrances. The counsellors were not thenceforth to have the right of deliberating without voting in the assembly of the chambers until after ten years' service. It was expressly interdicted to the members of the parliament to suspend their functions, under penalty of removal from office. Lastly, a royal edict abolished two of the chambers of inquiries, and more than sixty counsellorships.

The members of the chambers of inquiries and requests sent in their resignation in a body on the same day, declaring that, degraded, and deprived of their most essential functions, it had become impossible for them to serve the King. Half of the great chamber followed this example: a score of magistrates alone, out of two hundred, retained their office. The spontaneous dissolution of the parliament produced an extraordinary effect. Abuse of Madame de Pompadour was heard in the streets, mingled with outcries against the *tyrant of the French*. Foreigners, who had been for some years observing our internal crises, were led to believe in the imminence of the revolution already foreseen. These presentiments were premature. There were philosophic sects in France; there were as yet no political parties. The parliaments were centres of opposition, and not of revolution; the multitude, discontented and unhappy, clung as yet to no hope, no idea

Digitized by Google

of the future: from the confused irritation there arose, not a great popular movement, but an act of individual anger and folly.[1]

On the evening of January 5, 1757, as the King was descending the steps of the *marble court* on his way from Versailles to Trianon, a man glided between the guards, and struck him a blow in the side. Louis put his hand to the place, and withdrew it stained with blood. With much presence of mind, he recognized the assassin by the fact that he alone wore his hat; and ordered him to be seized, forbidding any harm to be done him. No other weapon was found on the man than a knife with two blades, the smaller of which was only a kind of penknife. It was with this that he had struck the blow; and, owing to the thick frock-coat[2] in which the King was wrapped, the point had penetrated only one-third of an inch.

Fear came to Louis with reflection. For this *pin-prick*, as Voltaire calls it, he ordered himself to be carried away and put to bed, sent for the nearest confessor, caused absolution to be given him again and again five or six times, summoned the Dauphin, charged him to preside over the councils, and comported himself like a man mortally wounded. Indeed, the suspicion that the weapon might have been poisoned had crossed his mind.

Meanwhile the court was in commotion; the courtiers thronged round the Dauphin; and the house of Madame de Pompadour was left empty. Even after they were reassured concerning the life of the King, they expected a renewal of the scenes of Metz in 1744; and Machault came the next morning to insinuate to the Marchioness that it was the King's intention that she should quit the court. Machault was very weary of the yoke of his protectress, and did not believe that gratitude ought eternally to bind him to the chariot-wheels of a favorite who was ruining the State. Overwhelmed at first with despair, then reanimated by the counsels of a female friend, Madame de Pompadour protracted her departure, thinking that to gain time was to gain every thing.

Versailles intrigued: Paris and France were stupefied. Such an action was so remote from the manners of the age! Men thought themselves dreaming, on witnessing the return of the days of Jacques Clement and Ravaillac. Parliamentarians and

[1] See *Mercure hist. et politiq.* t. CXLII. p. 62; Soulavie, t. VIII. p. 347.

[2] This outside garment had been recently imported from England, as its true name *reading-coat* (*redingote*) signifies, to replace the cloak.

Digitized by Google

churchmen eagerly threw the responsibility on each other. There was a reaction in favor of the King: it was believed for a moment that he was still beloved. The members of the parliament of Paris who had resigned offered to resume their functions to avenge the King's person. The parliaments of the provinces, the States of Brittany, still in opposition to the court, hastened to send protestations of devotion to Louis. The King, after passing several days in bed without the slightest appearance of fever, at last decided to rise, and attend to business. He did not accept the offers of the resigned parliamentarians; referred the trial of the assassin to the great chamber, that is, to those of the members who had not followed their colleagues; and, persevering in his resentment, exiled sixteen of the members of the parliament who had proffered their resignation.

Infinite investigations were made concerning the antecedents and relatives of the assassin: he was subjected to the cruelest and most repeated torture: a rack, invented by the diabolical imagination of the pontifical inquisitors, was even brought from Avignon. The result of all these proceedings was, that this man, named Damiens, had no accomplices, and was not, to speak truly, an assassin. He was a lackey out of place, a man of disordered brain, who had been frenzied by the speeches to which he had listened in the great hall of the palace, or in the ante-chambers of some of the parliamentary counsellors and bigoted Jansenists. He had not wished to kill the King, but only to *give him a warning*, in order that he might cease persecuting the parliament, and punish the archbishop, *the cause of all the evil.* He should have been sent to the Bicêtre: he was condemned to the terrible punishment which Ravaillac had endured. His flesh was torn with red-hot pincers, and melted lead was poured into the wounds, after which he was quartered by four horses (March 28, 1757). The wives of the great nobles and the financiers thought to pay their court by imitating the manners of the times of Catherine de Medici, and outbidding each other for the windows of the Grève in order to witness the reappearance of these horrors. Louis, who at least did not add cruelty to his other vices, would have been disgusted by them.

The judges added to this barbarity a detestable act of iniquity: they condemned to perpetual punishment the innocent family of Damiens, his father, wife, and child, with the penalty of death if they returned to France. The King, in truth, granted them a pension.[1]

[1] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XV.* ch. 37; *Hist. du Parlement de Paris*, ch. 67; Soulavie,

Digitized by Google

A cabinet revolution followed the King's *recovery*. Habit had speedily brought back the King to Madame de Pompadour: become more powerful than ever, she avenged herself first on an unfaithful friend, then on an inveterate enemy. The King, humiliated at the weakness which he had revealed to Machault, had little hesitation in sacrificing this minister. The fall of one of the authors of the recall of Dupleix was a great calamity to France: no more need be said concerning the abyss into which the government was plunging. Madame de Pompadour, satisfied with this victory, would have consented to a reconciliation with the Count d'Argenson. She made him advances, which he received with imprudent haughtiness; then sent him to rejoin Machault. The King abandoned D'Argenson either because he had shown too much eagerness towards the Dauphin on the day of the attempted assassination, or because of a letter intercepted, and perhaps forged, by Madame de Pompadour, in which he spoke disrespectfully of Louis (February 1, 1757). The ministries of war and the marine were transferred to pitiable ciphers; and the instability became such in the marine and the finances, that we can scarcely remember the names of the obscure personages whom intrigue and caprice called by turns for a few months to a shadow of power. The marine fell, in 1758, to an ex-lieutenant of police, Berryer, who was reputed to have learned the interests of the State by purveying for the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and by spying, and distributing *lettres de cachet* in behalf of Madame de Pompadour.[1] Madame de Pompadour reigned and governed: she was the only adversary opposed by the French government to Frederick and William Pitt. The wit whom she had just made minister of State through gratitude to him for having remained faithful to her during the crisis, and whom she speedily made minister of foreign affairs (June, 1757), — the Abbé de Bernis, — might have given her useful advice; but she desired an instrument, and not a counsellor, as Bernis was not long in experiencing.

The benefit of the popular revolution was already lost by the King. Louis had not known how to seize the first moment of emotion to satisfy public opinion and compound with the parliament; neither did he know how to hold out rigorously to the end: so that he had neither the advantage of gentleness nor of

t. VIII. ch. xiv.; *Mém. de madame du Hausset*, p. 99; Notice concerning the Cardinal de Bernis, appended to Madame du Hausset; *Mercure historiq.* t. CXLII. p. 96; *Mém. de Besenval*, t. I. p. 303; Sismondi, t. XXVIII. p. 111.

[1] This man was finally made keeper of the seals!

Digitized by Google

energy. He imprisoned eight members of the parliament of Franche-Comté, and two members of the parliament of Brittany. The course of justice remained for several months suspended at Paris, Rouen, Rennes, Besançon, Pau, etc. Louis wished to restore their offices to the greater part of the members of the parliament of Paris who had resigned, provided that they asked for them again, but to hold as valid the resignation of the sixteen exiled leaders. The parliamentarians refused to return without their colleagues, and without the revocation of the measures that had offended them. The parliaments of the provinces sent the most violent remonstrances, one after the other, in favor of the reëstablishment of the parliament at Paris. Louis yielded, weary of strife: he consented at length to annul all the resignations; to withdraw, under the pretext of interpreting it, the declaration which had so much irritated the magistrates; and to recall the exiles: but the two chambers which had been abolished were not reëstablished, and their members were distributed among the three other chambers of inquiries (September 1). The provincial parliaments also obtained the reintegration of their exiled or imprisoned *members*. By way of compensation, the King recalled the exiled prelates, entreating them to listen to the pacific exhortations of the Holy Father. Internal peace thus seemed reëstablished for a moment; but the King had not shown sufficient good will to obtain the credit of it. The principal negotiator of the compromise had been the Abbé de Bernis. Madame de Pompadour had been very glad to restore the parliament, through hostility to the Jesuits and the party of the Dauphin. She wished to be able to boast of making peace in France, and war in Germany.

Her policy, conciliatory at home, became more and more violent abroad, if to such a thing can be given the name of policy. The French ministers were little more than puppets, of which Maria Theresa and Kaunitz held the wires. The cabinet of Versailles, impelled by Madame de Pompadour, together with the Dauphiness, the daughter of the Elector-King, Augustus III., had broken off all diplomatic relations with Prussia from October, 1756, which indicated the intention of engaging against her otherwise than as a simple auxiliary of Austria.

Preparations were made on the most extensive scale during the winter of 1756–1757 for the war in Germany. Russia, already allied to Austria and Saxony, had acceded, October 31, 1756, to the treaty between France and Austria; and it had been agreed

Digitized by Google

that France should pay the subsidy promised by Austria to the Czarina.[1]

This was only the beginning of the exorbitant demands of the court of Vienna. The masses of French troops that moved to the Rhine from the opening of the spring attest that the treaty of Versailles and its twenty-four thousand auxiliaries were already left far behind; and that France was about not merely to assist, but to plunge headlong into the continental war, — the Austrian war. As to the maritime war, the French war, it was left to do the best it could!

January 17, 1757, the Germanic Diet, under the double pressure of Austria and France, had determined to despatch the contingents of the Circles to aid in the reëstablishment of the peace disturbed by the aggression of the King of Prussia. March 14, France and Sweden signified to the Diet that they should fulfil the obligations incumbent on them as guarantees of the treaty of Westphalia. The aristocratic party of the senate had been wholly the rulers in Sweden since a monarchical conspiracy had been recently stifled in the blood of its authors (in 1756); and the senate had forced the King, the brother-in-law of Frederick II.,[2] to side with France and Austria against the brother of his wife, without even consulting the Four States of Sweden. A tempting bait had been offered the Swedes. By a treaty of March 21, France promised to aid Sweden in recovering what she had lost in Pomerania since 1679. Austria acceded to the treaty; and, a few months after (September 22), a more explicit agreement promised all Pomerania, on the basis of the treaty of Westphalia, in addition to a subsidy paid, half by France and half by Austria, on condition that Sweden put twenty thousand soldiers into the field. The Elector of Cologne, the Palatine, all the princes of the Rhine, and all those of Southern Germany, were drawn into the coalition by French subsidies. Much ability was employed by the diplomatic agents of France in the pursuit of an insane aim. No allies were left to England and Prussia but the House of Brunswick, Hesse Cassel, and a few petty Saxon princes. Neutrality was definitively refused to Hanover, unless it granted the French free

[1] The omission relative to Turkey, in the treaty of May 1, 1756, with Austria, was partially repaired in the agreement with Russia. It was stipulated therein that France should be bound to nothing against the Turks. — See Flassan, t. VI. p. 200.

[2] The King of Sweden was then Adolphus Frederick of Holstein Eutin, elected in 1751 by the protection of Russia, after the death of King Frederick of Hesse Cassel, whose brother was set aside from the throne.

Digitized by Google

passage to Prussia, and a place as security. Madame de Pompadour here exceeded the wishes of Maria Theresa, who would have consented to the neutrality of Hanover; but all our court generals, eager for an easy glory, now thought it impossible to send too many forces to Germany.

When the Austrian cabinet saw France well disposed, it seized the happy moment, and sought to guarantee, by a formal engagement, that this great fire would not die out after the first effort. A second compact between Versailles and Vienna was therefore signed on the anniversary of the first (May 1, 1757). Louis XV. was made to sign a promise to support one hundred and five thousand men at arms during the whole course of the war; also to keep ten thousand Bavarians and Würtembergers in his pay on behalf of the Empress-Queen, and to pay Maria Theresa an annual subsidy of twelve million German florins. Maria Theresa only engaged to support eighty thousand soldiers. The war was not to cease until Frederick had lost, with Silesia, Glatz, Crossen, Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Pomerania, Cleves, Geldern, etc. The Empress was to have the greater part of the spoils; and, next to her, Sweden, Saxony, the Palatine, etc. France and Austria were to consent to the election in Poland of a prince of the House of Saxony after Augustus III., and were to pay to Augustus III. a joint and equal subsidy. As soon as Silesia, and all her share of the conquest, was secured to Maria Theresa by a definitive treaty, she was to cede, to France, Ostend, Nieuwpoort, Furnes, the fort of Knocke, Ypres, Mons, Chimay, and Beaumont. The maritime places of Ostend and Nieuwpoort were to be placed temporarily in the custody of France. The rest of the Austrian Netherlands were to be transferred to the Infant Duke of Parma in exchange for his duchy, which was to be ceded to Austria. On the extinction of the posterity of the Ex-Duke of Parma, become sovereign of the Netherlands, the Netherlands were to revert to Maria Theresa or her heirs, with the exception of Tournaisis, which was to be ceded to France. Luxemburg was to be razed. The succession of the Two Sicilies, promised by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to the Duke of Parma in case the King of the Two Sicilies should become King of Spain, was guaranteed, in this event, to the younger son of the King of the Two Sicilies, provided that he ceded the Presides to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany; that is, to Austria. France promised her good offices to secure Modena to Austria. Maria Theresa was to exert herself, at the recurrence of peace, to cause Minorca to be ceded to France by England,

Digitized by Google

and to deliver Dunkirk from its fetters (this was only a promise of good offices, and not an obligatory clause as with respect to Silesia). France was to second the election of the Arch-Duke Joseph, the son of the Emperor Francis I. and Maria Theresa, to the dignity of King of the Romans.[1]

The parts were assigned, admitting that Russia did not demand hers, — a thing very improbable. The question now was to take them. In the month of April, the armies were everywhere in motion. Eighty thousand French, under the command of the Marshal d'Estrées,[2] invaded the Prussian domains of the Lower Rhine; and some other French troops assembled in Alsace to repair to Central Germany. The Austrians concentrated in Bohemia; the Swedes, from Stralsund and Rügen, threatened Prussian Pomerania; and a formidable body of Russians advanced slowly through Lithuania towards Prussia. The republic of Poland had, indeed, refused to participate in the war; but it was not in a condition to close its territory to the belligerent parties. Frederick was in Saxony with the main body of his forces, confronting the Austrians; and a Prussian army corps was preparing to defend royal Prussia against the Russians. Frederick was desirous that the Hanoverian army, reassembled in Westphalia under the Duke of Cumberland,[3] should defend the Lower Rhine against the French. The Hanoverians pretended to be able to make a stand nowhere but on the Weser, — a river much less advantageous to dispute than the Rhine. Cleves, Geldern, Wesel, then nearly all Westphalia, were therefore evacuated almost without striking a blow, in proportion as the Marshal d'Estrées advanced, — a general more circumspect and slower than was necessary before an army inferior in numbers. Cumberland had only fifty thousand men. The French army extended, without opposition, from Hesse to East Friesland. The war was carried on tamely in this direction, and there was not for nearly four months a single action worthy of remark (April–July).

The war in Bohemia offered a terrible contrast to that in Westphalia. Frederick had, according to his custom, seized the offensive. Four Prussian corps had suddenly debouched from Saxony and Silesia into Bohemia in the latter part of April, and rejoined each other before Prague. Prince Charles of Lorraine, the brother of the Emperor, and Field-Marshal Braun, who covered Prague

[1] Garden, *Hist. des Traités de paix*, t. IV. pp. 39–44, 349.

[2] He was a Le Tellier. He belonged to the D'Estrées only by the mother's side.

[3] It was composed of German troops returned from England, and new levies.

Digitized by Google

with the principal Austrian army, seventy thousand strong, had not time to receive a second army corps that Field-Marshal Daun was bringing to their assistance. Frederick assailed them with almost equal numbers, and forced them from their positions, after immense carnage (May 6). It was the most bloody day that had been witnessed since Malplaquet. Forty thousand Austrians threw themselves into Prague; twelve thousand more, cut off from the main body of their army, joined Marshal Daun; the rest were killed or captured. Frederick detached an army corps to hold Daun in check, and, with the rest, besieged the vanquished troops in Prague. Unable to storm a whole army in this great city, he attempted to reduce Prague by famine. At the end of a few weeks, the besieged army began, indeed, to suffer greatly; but the other army of the enemy, that of Daun, was increasing in an alarming manner. Frederick took a rash course. He went in person to reënforce the much too feeble corps that was holding Daun in check near Kolin, fifteen leagues from Prague, and attacked Daun in a strong position, with thirty-five thousand men against sixty thousand (June 18).[1] He was defeated with very great loss. Owing to the dilatoriness of the Austrians, this grave repulse did not become a disaster; and Frederick had leisure to raise the siege of Prague, and to withdraw towards Saxony in good order.

While Frederick was driven from Bohemia, his allies were not more fortunate in Lower Germany. A collision had finally taken place, July 26, between the Marshal d'Estrées and the Duke of Cumberland. The Hanoverians were covered by the Weser. The French crossed this river, and turned the enemy between Hameln and Hastenbeck. The French right, commanded by our best general, Chevert, carried the heights occupied by the enemy's left; and D'Estrées was advancing with the centre, when a man destined to great military renown, Prince Ferdinand, the brother of the Duke of Brunswick, made his way through the forest with a few battalions, between Chevert's right, which was not sufficiently supported, and the main body of the French army. Confusion was already prevailing in the army, and D'Estrées had

[1] A Saxon corps formed a part of this army. A great portion of the Saxons, forcibly enlisted by Frederick at Pirna, had deserted. It was in the action of Kolin that Frederick made the famous speech to his hesitating soldiers: "Do you think, then, that you will live always?" Concerning all of Frederick's campaigns, see his *Hist. de la guerre de Sept Ans*, t. I., II.; and the *Mémoires de Napoleon*, t. VII. Napoleon criticises all of Frederick's operations. He was the only commentator that could have been an authority on such a subject.

Digitized by Google

ordered a retrograde movement, when it was discovered that Ferdinand was not supported, and that Cumberland was in full retreat. The next day, D'Estrées received a courier who brought him his recall. The court, impatient at his delays, sent him as a successor the *hero of Mahon*. The exchange was not destined to be advantageous.

Richelieu owed his appointment to the aged Pâris Duvernei, the commissary-general, whose mind, fertile in ideas and resources, rendered him the necessary counsellor of all the rulers. Duvernei had the ear of Madame de Pompadour like that of the Count d'Argenson. The real minister of war, without the title, he had won the favorite and the King by a magnificent plan to overpower the King of Prussia in two campaigns. Frederick was to be hemmed in at once by the Elbe and the Oder; the great French army, transferred to the command of Richelieu, after crushing the Hanoverians, was to move on Magdeburg; a second corps of twenty-five thousand men, commanded by the Prince de Soubise, an intimate friend of Madame de Pompadour, was to join the army of the Circles of the Empire, almost equal in numbers, and to capture Electoral Saxony; and the Russians and the Swedes were to unite in the heart of Pomerania and Brandenburg. It belonged to the Austrians to capture Lusatia and Silesia.

Success seemed probable. The great French army, already far superior to the enemy under D'Estrées, and again reënforced under Richelieu, drove Cumberland before it, who, instead of falling back towards the Middle Elbe and the Prussians, retired northward towards the Lower Elbe, every day receding farther from his allies. Hanover, Brunswick, Verden, and Bremen were occupied by the French. The corps of Soubise, leaving Alsace, joined in Thuringia the contingents of the Circles, commanded by the Prince of Saxe-Hildburghausen, and threatened the electorate of Saxony (the end of August). The Russians arrived in line with from sixty to eighty thousand men; but instead of pushing forward, as was desired, directly to the Oder, they invaded the kingdom of Prussia. The Prussian marshal, Lehwald, boldly attacked them at Jägerndorf with an army two-thirds inferior, and was repulsed (August 30). Fifteen thousand Swedes, meanwhile, had landed in Pomerania: the Austrians were in Lusatia, and at the entrance of Silesia. Frederick left the main body of his troops with the Prince of Brunswick Bevern to confront the Austrians, and hastened to Saxony with a feeble corps in order to arrest the Franco-Imperialists. He received fatal intelligence

Digitized by Google

on reaching the Saale. The Duke of Cumberland, driven to bay by the French on the Lower Elbe, near Stade, had just capitulated with all his army. An agreement, signed at Kloster-Zeven, September 8, through the mediation of a neutral power, Denmark, had stipulated the cessation of hostilities between the French and the Hanoverians; the dismissal of the Hessian, Brunswick, and other auxiliaries, to their respective countries; and the retirement of the Hanoverians beyond the Elbe, to the Duchy of Lauenburg, the garrison of Stade excepted.

Frederick despaired for a moment: he felt himself on the point of being crushed between so many enemies. He saw Richelieu, at liberty to join Soubise and Hildburghausen, already greatly superior to the Prussian corps that was opposed to them; he saw Daun, much stronger than Bevern; Prussia and Pomerania invaded; and Austrian parties already roving over Brandenburg: a large detachment had penetrated to Berlin, and laid this defenceless capital under contribution. The thought of suicide occurred to Frederick, as was expressed by him in an *Epistle to the Marquis d'Argens*, which is perhaps the most singular monument of this strange character, — a mixture of lamentations, heroic bravado, materialistic maxims, and appeals to the memory of the *heroes of liberty*, the Catos and Brutuses, whose example he was about to follow. It is not exactly evident what relation the despot of Prussia could find between himself and the *heroes of liberty*. This *Epistle*, and that which he soon after addressed to Voltaire, who had retired some time before to Geneva, are almost the only flashes of poetry in which is found the often unfortunate brilliancy of the royal wit. It was not certainly a common soul that could draw inspiration from such a tempest. Frederick did not suffer himself long to be cast down. "For my part," he wrote to Voltaire, on congratulating him upon his philosophic retreat, —

> "For my part, threatened with shipwreck,
> I must, in braving the storm,
> Think, live, and die like a king.[1]

He resolved not to take his own life, but to conquer, or die on the field of battle.

The clouds began to break here and there on his gloomy horizon. The Russian army, which seemed destined to swallow up Prussia proper, instead of profiting by its victory of Jägerndorf,

[1] See *Œuvres de Frédéric II.* t. VI.; *Commentaire historique de Voltaire;* Correspondence of Voltaire and the King of Prussia, 1757.

Digitized by Google

had beat a retreat as early as the middle of September, and had already taken up its winter-quarters in Poland, which it treated as a conquered country. English gold, and, above all, the sympathy of the heir presumptive of Russia, the Grand Duke Peter of Holstein Gottorp, for the King of Prussia, had gained over Chancellor Bestoujeff, who directed the ministry, and Field-Marshal Apraxin, the leader of the army. The retreat of the Russians was a veritable defection, contrary to the intentions of their Czarina. The Prussian marshal, Lehwald, found himself at liberty to march to the assistance of Pomerania, and to force back the Swedes into the Island of Rügen. On the other hand, the consequences of the agreement of Kloster-Zeven were not what Frederick had feared. This agreement had been very badly made. Richelieu, a mediocre, although tolerably active general, and an incapable diplomatist, had not been sagacious enough to secure the only serious guarantee of the engagements contracted by his adversaries, — the immediate separation and disarming of the capitulated troops: he had not even stipulated the duration of the suspension of arms, as if this would endure by full right until peace, or the interdiction to the capitulated troops to serve against the Empire and Austria. The Hanoverians and their auxiliaries did not hasten, the one to return home, the other to cross the Elbe. The French cabinet attempted in vain to repair the folly of its general, and to complete the agreement: its efforts only served to furnish pretexts to the enemy for evading the execution of his promises. It became evident that the capitulation would be observed or violated according to the good or bad fortune of the Prussian arms.

Richelieu, however, might still have put the King of Prussia in great peril: he had left a small corps in observation before the capitulated army, and had moved on Halberstadt. From there, he might have shut in Frederick between himself and Soubise, and forced him at least to recross the Elbe. The French cabinet prevented him from doing this: Madame de Pompadour wished to secure to her favorite Soubise the honor of delivering Saxony. Richelieu received orders to send a reënforcement to Soubise, and to remain at Halberstadt with the main body of his troops. He indemnified himself for glory by booty, subjected Hanover and the neighboring cantons to a ransom, and pillaged and authorized pillage around him with shameless cynicism: the soldiers called him *Father Marauder*. The organization of the French armies had long since begun profoundly to deteriorate; but the corrup-

Digitized by Google

tion of Richelieu and the weakness of Soubise carried the evil to its height during this campaign. The want of discipline and the demoralization knew no bounds: these armies, full of luxury and wretchedness, encumbered with courtesans, merchants, and lackeys, dragging after them three times as many beasts of burden as saddle-horses, and displaying travelling bazaars of articles of fashion in the midst of their tents, resembled the cohorts of Darius and Xerxes more than the armies of Turenne and Gustavus Adolphus.[1] The leaders permitted the soldiery all kinds of depredations, that its indigence might not revolt against their magnificent voluptuousness. Hope returned to Frederick's heart as soon as he had seen his adversaries near by.

When Frederick reached Saxony, the French and the Imperialists were dispersed in Thuringia: he drove Soubise before him as far as Eisenach (September 20). This diversion would have been very rash before other enemies; for Richelieu, who had arrived from Halberstadt, might have cut off Frederick's retreat by reascending the Saale: but a handful of soldiers commanded by Ferdinand of Brunswick sufficed to restrain Richelieu, who was forbidden to advance; and Soubise and Hildburghausen united, shamefully suffered themselves to be arrested, and thrown into disorder at Gotha, by a small advance guard led by Seidlitz, the famous organizer of the Prussian cavalry (October 13). Frederick, during the interval, having been obliged to make a retrograde movement towards Brandenburg, which was infested by Austrian parties, the Franco-Imperialists advanced as far as Leipsic. Frederick hastened thither. They drew back, and put the Saale between them and him. Frederick crossed the river, and joined them near Rosbach. He had less than twenty-five thousand men against more than fifty thousand. Soubise, nevertheless, was inclined to avoid battle. The Prince of Hildburghausen wished to fight: he had the chief command, the French being only auxiliaries. They marched on the enemy without precautions, and without reconnoitring (November 3). The position occupied by Frederick being too strong to be attacked in front, they attempted to flank his left. He flanked his adversaries, on his side, on their right, by making a change of front, which only an army like his was capable of effecting with such velocity. His movement was masked by heights

[1] Twelve thousand peddlers' and sutlers' wagons were seen at one time in the army of Soubise, exclusive of the train of the officers. The squadron of the Duke de Villeroi (body-guards) had alone a suite of twelve hundred horses. — Archenholtz, *Hist. de la guerre de Sept Ans*, p. 119.

Digitized by Google

and ravines. Suddenly, at nightfall, the Prussian cavalry burst on the main body of the Franco-Imperial cavalry, without leaving it time to form. Batteries unmasked on the heights fired upon the hollows, into which the allied infantry crowded, and which was harassed there in flank by the musketry of the main body of the Prussian infantry, and was charged by a reserve of cavalry. In a few moments, all was overpowered; and the allied army presented nothing but a shapeless mass. Night covered the rout. The allied army disbanded like a horde of Tartars, infesting all Thuringia with the most odious excesses.

One of the French general officers, the only one that had succeeded in maintaining any order in the small corps which he commanded, the Count de Saint-Germain, has explained this shameful catastrophe. On the day of the battle, there were six thousand marauders absent from the camp! Of the two generals, Soubise and Hildburghausen, the German was even more incapable and less obeyed than the Frenchman. Not only was a full third of the army formed of the troops of the Circles, very bad soldiers, and, besides, greatly disaffected towards the Austro-French cause;[1] but the other two-thirds, the French army corps, were composed in great part of foreign and Protestant regiments, who fought, despite themselves, against the King of Prussia. As to the French troops proper, apart from the corrupting examples which they received from the court nobility, their disorganization arose from two leading causes: the one was too great increase of the staff of officers, overloaded with generals ignorant and jealous of each other, and with needy officers, without emulation, or hope of advancement, who thought only of gleaning profit from their comrades;[2] the other was the very endeavors that had been made to improve the tactics. These confused attempts, without any fixed system, varying from one regiment to another, had made the army a true Babel.

Frederick might easily have prevented the allies from rallying,

[1] All Protestant Germany, in spite of its princes, was, at heart, with the Prussians. The Würtemberg contingent had mutinied when it had been sought to lead it to the Austrian army.

[2] *Correspondance du comte de Saint-Germain*, p. 196. The system of leaving the recruital and maintenance of the companies to the care of the captains was very fatal to discipline. It is inconceivable that Louvois should have suffered it to subsist. "Our nation has no longer any military spirit!" exclaims the Count de Saint-Germain sorrowfully. "The feeling of honor is annihilated; . . . we do not know how to carry on war; . . . madness rules everywhere!"—*Ibid.* pp. 170–213. Rochambeau, in his *Mémoires* (t. I. p. 121), states that the manœuvring was so bad, that a whole day was needed to draw up the army in order of battle.

Digitized by Google

and have destroyed them; but, meanwhile, Silesia was about to be lost: the Austrians had forced back the Prince of Bevern from Lusatia upon the Oder, and were besieging Schweidnitz. Frederick returned rapidly to Silesia: he learned on his way of the loss of Schweidnitz, the defeat of Bevern by Daun, and the loss of Breslau (November 11–22–24). It was the most glorious moment of his life. He pushed straight onwards by forced marches, rallied the wrecks of Bevern's forces to his little army, and burst, with thirty-three thousand men, upon an enemy almost double in numbers. By an oblique attack, he fell on the left of the enemy, who was expecting him in front, and broke it. Daun could not succeed in changing his order of battle under the fire and impetuous charges of the Prussians: he was treated like Soubise (December 3). He brought back less than twenty thousand men to Bohemia: forty thousand Austrians were killed, captured, dispersed, or surrendered a few days afterwards in Breslau. This battle of Leuthen is one of the masterpieces of the military art.

Frederick thus gloriously terminated the campaign which had seemed destined to annihilate him. Fortune returned to him everywhere. The Hanoverians had not waited for the triumph of Leuthen to break the agreement of Kloster-Zeven. Mr. Pitt, whom George II., obstinate in his antipathies, had removed from the ministry in April, but recalled in July under the threatening outcry of public opinion, — Mr. Pitt, become in some sort the dictator of Great Britain, had induced the government to decide upon the rupture of this humiliating compact at the end of November, and to solicit of Frederick Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick as the leader of the Hanoverians. The Duke of Cumberland, who had completely lost on the Weser the renown usurped at Culloden, disappeared, deprived of his popularity, from the political stage. Prince Ferdinand recommenced hostilities against the Marshal de Richelieu as early as the beginning of December; but the rigor of the season soon obliged both armies to take up their winter-quarters in Hanover.[1]

Mr. Pitt, thwarted by George II., and ill served by the instruments of his great designs, had not hitherto been as successful in the waters either of Europe or America as his ally Frederick in

[1] Concerning the campaigns of the French in 1757, see Frederick II., *Guerre de Sept Ans*, t. I. ch. v., vi.; *Mém. de Napoléon*, t. VII.; *Précis des guerres de Frédéric II.* ch. iii.; *Mém. de Duclos*, ap. *Collect. Michaud*, 3d series, t. X. p. 657; *Correspondance de Richelieu*; *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. pp. 83–106; *Mém. de Besenval*, t. I. p. 74; Flassan, t. VI. p. 92.

Digitized by Google

Germany. At the moment of the reverses of the Hanoverian army, he had sought to effect a diversion on the coasts of France. A strong English squadron, convoying ten or twelve thousand troops, had crossed the channel that separates the Islands of Ré and Oléron, and taken possession of the Island of Aix, which commands the mouth of the Charente. The aim of the enterprise was the destruction of Rochefort, one of our three maritime arsenals. Rochefort was by no means in a position of defence; and if the English had landed, and forced their way into the Charente by favor of the high tides, they would have infallibly succeeded. They had captured some peasants on the coast: these brave men, under the threats and promises of the enemy, maintained, with imperturbable assurance, that the fortifications were in good condition, the fosses full of water, and the place well garrisoned with soldiers. The English general lost several days in hesitation: meanwhile reënforcements arrived, and success became impossible. October 1, the English fleet departed, having achieved no other exploit than the demolition of the fort of the Island of Aix.[1] The general, Mordaunt, was brought to trial on his return, but, more fortunate than Byng, was acquitted.

On the coast of Canada, the English had changed the plan of combined attacks which had succeeded so badly with them, and resolved to concentrate their efforts on Louisburg: this conquest would give them the mouth of the St. Lawrence, and enable them to cut off communication between France and Canada. Fifteen ships of the line and eleven thousand troops were collected on the coast of Nova Scotia. The English expected to find only a weak squadron at Royal Island; but, conformably to the plan of the campaign made by Machault before his fall, two more squadrons had joined the first, and seventeen ships filled the roadstead of Louisburg. The English renounced the thought of landing, sent back their soldiers, and, reënforced by four ships, cruised about for some time to tempt the French fleet to battle. A frightful tempest surprised them September 24, wrecked one of their vessels, and disabled twelve. The French admiral did not know how to take advantage of this to pursue and complete the destruction of the ruined fleet; and, ere long, a cruel epidemic, which broke out in our ships on their return to Brest, did as much harm as the storm had done to the enemy.

[1] *L'Esprit de la Tactique* (by the Marshal de Saxe), notes by the editor; *Vié privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 131, and documents, p. 381.

Digitized by Google

The government had done what it ought for the defence of Louisburg: this was not the case with respect to the Canadian continent. The governor and the general, Vaudreuil and Montcalm, had asked for a reënforcement of five thousand men: fifteen hundred were sent them. The ministry was terrified at seeing the expenses of Canada raised from one million a year to seven or eight millions, and continually increasing: the defence of these *frozen deserts* cost too dear! It was better, doubtless, to give fifty millions to Maria Theresa, the Russians, and the German princes, and to spend a hundred more for an army designed to place Germany again under the Austrian yoke, which France had formerly had such difficulty in breaking! The defenders of Canada were not discouraged, and the campaign of 1757 was not less honorable to them than the preceding ones. When they saw the English directing their principal forces against Louisburg, they seized the offensive in the direction of the frontier of New York: Montcalm assaulted and took Fort William Henry, which the English had built at the head of Lake George, and which harassed Lake Champlain and the road to Central Canada (August, 1757).

Each victory was only a respite to this valiant colony, assailed by enemies constantly springing up anew. The most cruel of these enemies was want. The harvest had failed; all Canada was suffering from famine; the population and the soldiers were reduced to rations as in a besieged town;[1] and a civil administration, as corrupt and disorderly as the military government was firm and generous, aggravated these calamities instead of relieving them.

This year also had therefore been unfavorable to the English, except in India, of which we shall speak directly. Our Indian Company had continued its cowardly folly; but a squadron had been sent thither which might have repaired the evil.

To France, the beginning of the war had a significant character, — on the sea and in the colonies, glorious successes; on the continent, deplorable management and an ignominious repulse. It was no longer known how to carry on a great continental war: it was possible to sustain a petty colonial warfare, — petty in the number of combatants, great in its results, and in the character of the choice spirits that were engaged in it. Providence seemed to stay our hand, and to point to us where it was necessary to fight.

[1] Garneau, *Hist. du Canada*, t. III. ch. ii.; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* p. 186; Sainte-Croix, t. II. p. 260; Continuation of Hume, book xxvii.

Digitized by Google

The government closed its eyes and ears: it acted infuriatedly on the continent, and neglected the sea. This King, so eager to make peace in 1748, and so desirous afterwards of maintaining it at the most absurd price, the most shameful concessions to England, dreamed no longer of any thing but war to the death, and refused, during the winter, the overtures of peace attempted by the King of Prussia. The reason was, that the English had only threatened France, while Frederick had wounded the self-love of Louis XV. The intentions of the government were sufficiently characterized by the fact that the most important man that could be found, the aged Marshal de Belle-Isle, was placed in the ministry of war (February 29, 1758), whilst the marine remained in the hands of men of straw, who succeeded each other by chance.

The English, meanwhile, made prodigious efforts at once on the sea to attain their true aim, and on the land to divert and absorb the forces of France. The good order of the administration sufficed for this double employment. The parliament, assembled in December, 1757, had voted sixty thousand men for the navy, fifty-four thousand for the army, and nearly £10,500,000 for the budget of 1758: the real expenditure, regulated by the Committee of Ways and Means, amounted to still more, and exceeded £11,700,000. A treaty of April 11, 1758, secured to the King of Prussia a subsidy of £670,000; a subsidy which was afterwards renewed from year to year. The public, full of enthusiasm for William Pitt, instantly took the loans opened by the ministry. The English debt this year attained the sum of £87,367,210. Pitt neglected nothing to find agents capable of realizing his plans, and at length succeeded. The French government, on the contrary, plunged into every kind of financial and administrative disorder, carried on the continental war in which it was absorbed, as badly as the maritime war which it sacrificed. The Marshal de Belle-Isle vainly issued good regulations for the reformation of the army. Some were not executed; the rest could only bear fruit in the future.[1] The generals continued to be chosen, not from the war department, but from the boudoir of the favorite. When the ill success of the

[1] April 29, 1758. — Regulation prescribing that no officer should thenceforth have a regiment without having served at least seven years, five of which must have been as captain. This was abolishing the *colonels à la bavette*. To become captain, it was necessary to have served at least two years in the inferior grades. June 3. — Sumptuary laws for regulating the table of officers. — See *Anc. Lois françaises*, t. XXII. pp. 275, 276. Belle-Isle also strove to interdict the vendibility of companies.

Digitized by Google

agreement of Kloster-Zeven had caused the recall of Richelieu (February, 1758), who came to Paris to enjoy the fruit of his depredations,[1] a *young clergyman* of royal blood was given him as a successor, — the Count de Clermont, the brother of the late *Monsieur le Duc*, and commendatory Abbé of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. He had obtained permission from Rome to bear arms without renouncing his benefices; but he knew more of boudoirs and green-rooms than of camps.

The Abbé-General, on his arrival in Germany, found the army ruined by disease, want, and lack of discipline, and dispersed by Richelieu in quarters which covered forty-eight leagues of country, from the Rhine to Brunswick, in the presence of an enemy concentrated in such a manner as to be able to assemble in forty-eight hours. Clermont had not time to reconnoitre his position. Ferdinand of Brunswick, after concerting his plan of campaign with the King of Prussia, assembled the Hanoverian army in the middle of February, and moved rapidly upon the Weser, while a Prussian corps made a diversion towards Brunswick. The French detachments fell back on all sides in disorder towards the middle of Westphalia, evacuating Hanover, Bremen, and Verden: a corps of five thousand men was besieged and captured in Minden on the Weser, without any serious attempt having been made by the Count de Clermont to succor it (March 14). Clermont did not endeavor to make a stand anywhere, although he was still superior in numbers; Westphalia was abandoned, like Hanover, without fighting; and the army did not stop until it had recrossed the Rhine at Wesel (April 3). Eleven thousand French remained, sick and prisoners, in the hands of the enemy, who had been powerfully seconded by the general rising of the Hanoverian and Westphalian peasants, exasperated by our depredations.

This brilliant six weeks' campaign did not satisfy Ferdinand of Brunswick: after resting and reorganizing his army, he crossed the Rhine at Emmerick, on the frontier of Holland (June 2), occupied Cleves, and marched directly on Clermont, who had not had the sagacity to put himself in a posture to dispute the crossing of the Rhine. After sundry confused movements, Clermont had massed his army in a good position at Crefeld, between the Rhine and the Niers. Brunswick had less than thirty thousand men: Clermont's forces, swollen by numerous recruits, were incomparably superior. Brunswick effected a manœuvre, the

[1] The public gave the name of the Hanover Pavilion to an elegant structure built by Richelieu, on his return, at the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens.

Digitized by Google

temerity of which would have been insane, had he not relied on the profound incapacity of his enemy. He left half of his army confronting the French, and with the other half made a great circuit through an uneven and difficult country, and flanked the extreme French left. He was arrested an hour and a half by two brave officers, Rochambeau and Saint-Germain. There was full time to succor them, and to precipitate superior forces on the assailants; but no one stirred: the Abbé-General and his counsellors had taken the movement for a feigned attack. Rochambeau and Saint-Germain were overpowered, and Brunswick debouched in the rear of the army. Clermont ordered a retreat: more than three-fourths of the army had not fired a gun (June 23). He fell back to Cologne, while Prussian detachments took Roermond and Dusseldorf, and sent out parties as far as the gates of Brussels.

All the great names of ancient France were sullied or rendered ridiculous in turn by their unworthy heirs. After the Richelieus and the Rohans (Soubise), it was the turn of the Condés: the little prestige that remained to the House of Condé, since the ignominious deeds of *Monsieur le Duc* and the Count de Charolais, was left on the battle-field of Crefeld. The court dared not retain the Prince-Abbé in command. The question was to replace him. There were two good lieutenant-generals in the army, Chevert and Saint-Germain: neither was taken. The Marquis de Contades was chosen by seniority.

The operations which had taken place in the interior of Germany prevented Prince Ferdinand from prosecuting his undertakings on the left bank of the Rhine. Madame de Pompadour, who absolutely insisted on giving her friend Soubise an opportunity for revenge, had caused the army corps, defeated at Rosbach, and which had wintered on the allied territories of Franconia and the Palatinate, to be put in a condition for action. This army, reorganized on the banks of the Main, reënforced by the Würtemberg contingent paid by France to Austria, and raised to thirty thousand men, had marched forward in July, and invaded Hesse. Its advance guard defeated a corps inferior in numbers at Sangerhausen, which Ferdinand had left to guard Hesse (July 23); and Soubise reëntered Hanover. Ferdinand was forced to recross the Rhine; a very dangerous operation in the presence of an enemy that had the superiority in numbers. A rising of the river carried away his pontoon-bridges. Had Contades himself crossed the Rhine, and taken the Hanoverians in the rear, the destruction of

Digitized by Google

Ferdinand would have been certain. He contented himself with throwing Chevert on the right bank, with six or seven thousand men, to burn the bridges which the enemy was laying down anew at Rees, above Emmerick. The corps of Chevert, insufficient for this decisive movement, was repulsed by the troops that guarded the bridges; and Ferdinand of Brunswick stole a march on Contades and recrossed the river, evacuating the places that he had taken (August 10).

Contades crossed the Rhine after the enemy. He would have gladly joined Soubise on the Lippe; but Soubise had penetrated into Hanover. Ferdinand of Brunswick, posted under Münster, received there a reënforcement of twelve thousand English that had landed at Emden, while Contades was reënforced by five or six thousand Saxons. Ferdinand detached General Oberg, with fifteen thousand men, to join the Hessian corps defeated at Sangerhausen, capture Cassel, and cut off Soubise from Hesse. Soubise fell back in time on Cassel, received there a reënforcement sent by Contades under the command of Chevert, and attacked Oberg, October 7, at Lutterberg, on the Werra. The French were greatly superior. Chevert turned the enemy, took him in flank, and decided the victory. Oberg abandoned the confines of Hesse and Hanover to fall back on the army of Ferdinand. Chevert had won the battle: Madame de Pompadour gave the marshal's bâton to Soubise.

Ferdinand of Brunswick endeavored to avenge this repulse by preventing Chevert from returning to Contades' army: he was unsuccessful in this; but he succeeded in interrupting the communication between Contades and Soubise. Winter was approaching: Soubise, who had derived no advantage from the success of Lutterberg, evacuated Hesse, and took up his winter-quarters between the Lahn and the Main. Contades went to winter on the left bank of the Lower Rhine, leaving the enemy established in Westphalia. The resumption of the offensive beyond the Rhine remained therefore ineffectual; and the enemy kept the fruits of his first success, — a wretched issue of these two campaigns which had consumed so many men and resources.[1]

The war in Western Germany, or Hanover, had been this year completely distinct from that in Eastern Germany, or Prussia; so that we have been able to describe the one without even alluding

[1] Frederick II., *Guerre de Sept Ans*, t. I. ch. viii.; *Mém. de Napoléon*, t. VII.; *Précis*, etc., ch. iv.; Correspondence of the Count de Saint-Germain; *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 112.

Digitized by Google

to the other. The war in Prussia continued to be as grand in the military point of view, as lugubrious in the point of view of humanity: the destruction of men and devastation of territory therein exceeded the War of the Austrian Succession.

The Russians had been the first to move anew. The embassies of Austria and France had succeeded, by reanimating the Czarina Elizabeth's hatred of Frederick, in conquering the party of the heir presumptive, the Grand Duke, at the court of St. Petersburg, in favor of Prussia and England. The Chancellor Bestoujeff had been arrested and replaced by Woronzoff, the partisan of Vienna and Versailles; and Marshal Apraxin had been recalled: his successor, Fermor, reëntered Prussia as early as the month of January, 1758, and took possession of the whole province. The plan of the campaign had been for the Russians to march on Pomerania and Brandenburg, while the Austrians, masters of Silesia, retook Saxony. The great victory of Frederick at Leuthen, in December, 1757, had overthrown this plan. Frederick resolved not to suffer the Austrians to reorganize on his frontier, but to occupy them at a distance in their own country, in order to be able then to return to oppose the Russians. Despite the typhus-fever, which had carried off a multitude of his soldiers, he had filled up the ranks of his army during the winter. In the middle of March he entered the field, besieged and retook Schweidnitz, which achieved the liberation of Silesia (the middle of April), then fell upon Moravia (May).

The aim of the expedition was to take Olmütz, that the Austrians might use the campaign in retaking it, and that, meanwhile, Frederick might have his hands free. The enterprise was not happily conceived. The Prussians, so formidable on the field of battle, were still weakly organized as to engineering and siege artillery,—arms which had attained perfection only in France. The resistance of Olmütz gave Field-Marshal Daun time to reorganize an army superior in numbers to that of Frederick, and to besiege, in some sort, the besiegers. Frederick was compelled to raise the siege (July 1). He repaired his mistakes with genius. While Daun was awaiting him in the mountains that separated Moravia from Silesia, he effected his retreat through Bohemia, capturing on his way the magazines of the enemy. He reëntered Silesia at the opposite extremity of the province, left the main body of his army to one of his lieutenants to restrain the Austrians, and with a strong detachment hastened to join the Prussian army corps that was painfully disputing the ground with the Russians. The

Digitized by Google

Russians, masters of the kingdom of Prussia, had sought to take military occupation of Dantzic and Polish Prussia, although Poland was a perfect stranger to the war. French diplomacy had averted the blow, and the Russians had advanced through Posen into Brandenburg. They recoiled at the approach of the King of Prussia. Frederick had about thirty-five thousand men. General Fermor, out of nearly seventy thousand soldiers that the Russian army numbered, had only forty thousand at hand. Frederick hastened to attack Zorndorf (August 25). Some false manœuvres, which at first endangered his success, were repaired by the admirable cavalry of General Seidlitz: the Russians were defeated, and driven from Brandenburg. The Prussians avenged by terrible carnage the atrocities committed in their country by the Cossack and Muscovite hordes. Frederick, despite the repulse of Olmütz, had in some sort attained his end.

The Russians expelled, Frederick fell back on the Austrians, who, united with the contingents of the Empire, were on the point of overpowering the principal Prussian army in Saxony. Frederick liberated his troops. Marshal Daun repaired to Lusatia to endeavor to cut off the Prussians from Silesia, and to cover from a distance the siege of Neisse, which was about to be undertaken by an Austrian reserve corps. Frederick, in the course of the operations, pitched a camp at Hohenkirchen overlooked by woods and heights. He did not think that the circumspect Daun would ever dare attack him. This contempt of the enemy was rudely chastised. The Austrians hemmed in and captured the camp of the King of Prussia, who lost many men, and almost all his artillery (October 15). Frederick was never greater than after a reverse: he did, conquered, what he might have done a conqueror. With the aid of a reënforcement that came to him from Saxony, he manœuvred so well, that Daun was unable to bar his way to Silesia; then went to compel the raising of the siege of Neisse, and to rid Silesia once more of the Austrians (November 5). From there he returned like lightning to the Elbe, where Daun was menacing Dresden. The Austrians were driven back from Saxony into Bohemia (the end of November); and this long campaign, in which the coalition had displayed such great forces, terminated with no other loss to Frederick than that of the province of Prussia, which had not been defended, and which was too remote to permit him to carry his arms thither. His enemies were as unable to wrest Saxony from him as Silesia.

The moral effect in France of the first two years of the conti-

Digitized by Google

nental war was such disgust with the government and its allies, that it seemed as if French arms were not in question. Public opinion was *Prussian* at Paris, partly through infatuation for Frederick and Ferdinand of Brunswick, partly through an instinctive feeling that victory would be a misfortune for France in this *Austrian* war. French self-love sought to console itself by contemptuously disavowing every thing that pertained to a power which there was no hope of changing. Such a sentiment was a true denationalization. The military leaders themselves extolled the Prussians who defeated them, but found it easier to admire than to imitate them.

Discouraged, France abandoned herself for want of power and knowledge to dispose of her own destinies: England, personified in the bold minister whom she had imposed on her King, acted with all her strength, directed by all her intellect. Her navy, increased by continual building, amounted in 1758 to one hundred and fifty-six ships of the line against seventy-seven possessed, it was said, by France: it is doubtful, however, whether the latter had so many. Mr. Pitt knew how to profit by this prodigious superiority. He had regulated the plan of operations in America, for 1758, according to the counsels of the man best acquainted with the world in dispute,—the illustrious Franklin, then agent at London of the principal Anglo-American colonies. This time, Pitt sent sufficient forces to attack simultaneously Louisburg and Canada. He despatched to America more than twenty ships of the line, and twelve thousand soldiers. The Anglo-American army was thus increased to twenty-two thousand soldiers and twenty-eight thousand mobilized militia, with a reserve of thirty thousand stationary militia. The English colonies were levied *en masse*. The French had in all less than eight thousand five hundred regular troops to defend both colonies. The inhabitants able to bear arms, from sixteen to sixty, amounted at most to seventeen or eighteen thousand.

The minister of war, the Marshal de Belle-Isle, did not, however, share in the shameful indifference of the court to these last defenders of French glory. Before his entrance into the ministry, he had presented to the King a plan to transport to Canada several thousand military colonists; but neither stability nor perseverance was the virtue of Belle-Isle: and besides, what would have been possible in 1757, when the French fleet advantageously disputed the American waters with the English fleet, was no longer so in 1758, with the system which had been adopted of dispersing our fleet

Digitized by Google

in small squadrons. Belle-Isle was unable to convey any aid of importance to the Canadians. A first squadron of six ships had set out from Toulon as early as November, 1757. It was arrested on the coast of Spain by the English fleet of the Mediterranean, fifteen ships strong, and was obliged to take refuge in the port of Carthagena. Three vessels commanded by Commodore Duquesne, the Ex-Governor of Canada, were sent to its aid. Duquesne fell among the English fleet, and was taken, with two of his ships, after a vigorous resistance (February 28, 1758). The squadron of Toulon was forced to abandon its expedition to America. Five ships that sailed from Brest were more fortunate, and arrived at Louisburg in the spring; but three more ships from the same port were unable to join them, the English fleet of America having commenced the siege of Louisburg in the interval. They succeeded, however, in throwing some soldiers into the Island of Cape Breton. In the month of April, another English squadron had attacked at the mouth of the Charente five ships of the line and some transports loaded with troops and munitions for Canada. Part of our vessels gained the offing: the rest stranded on the coast, throwing their freight overboard; and the expedition proved a failure. A convoy of fifty vessels, laden with wheat, succeeded, however, in reaching Quebec, and saved the Canadians from dying of famine this year (May 19).

Admiral Boscawen arrived in sight of Louisburg, June 2, with twenty-four ships of the line and eighteen frigates, escorting nearly sixteen thousand soldiers and militia. The place and Royal Island were defended by less than three thousand soldiers, twenty-five hundred militia, twelve hundred Indians, five ships, and five frigates. The fortifications of the town were in the worst condition; and the sole hope of the French was in the obstacles to disembarkation. The English proceeded to the most accessible point of the shore, — *Cormorant's Bay*. Almost all the garrison were in ambush there, with powerful artillery, behind a thick abatis of trees, from which it could have poured grape-shot on the masses of the enemy: unfortunately, the ambuscade unmasked too soon, just as the English were beginning to land. They reëmbarked, and effected the descent among some rocks which it had not been thought necessary to guard (June 8). The garrison was driven back into the place, and constrained to abandon the outworks, the fire from which commanded the port and the town. Reënforced by a small corps that had landed, and succeeded in making its way through the enemy, it nevertheless defended

Digitized by Google

itself heroically. The wife of the governor, Madame de Drucourt, another Madame Dupleix, set the example by crossing the ramparts under the enemy's bullets, and herself applying the match to the cannon. After six weeks' siege, the bastions crumbled everywhere under the formidable artillery of the enemy: the French fleet was burned in the port by the English batteries; and there remained no chance of safety. The governor capitulated July 26. Five thousand six hundred soldiers and sailors remained prisoners: the inhabitants of the town, the Island of Cape Breton, and the Island of St. John, were transported to France. The whole Gulf of St. Lawrence was in the possession of the English.

Canada had been assailed at the same time by such forces that resistance seemed impossible. More than sixteen thousand men had marched on Central Canada: they were designed first to capture the fortress of Carillon (or Ticonderoga), which protected Lake Champlain; then to proceed straight to Montreal. Another corps of nine thousand men was commissioned to conquer Fort Duquesne and the Valley of the Ohio. Not only were the French two-thirds inferior, but through a bad plan of the governor, Vaudreuil, their principal corps had been separated into two divisions of three thousand men each; the first posted at Ticonderoga, the second commissioned to make a diversion south of Lake Ontario. When the march of the English on Ticonderoga was certain, General Montcalm obtained the recall of the second corps from Lake Ontario, but too late. Montcalm scarcely received any reënforcements, and was forced with three thousand six hundred men to sustain an encounter with more than fifteen thousand enemies. He posted himself in an intrenched camp on the heights of Ticonderoga, near the fort, between Lakes Champlain and George. General Abercrombie attacked him there, July 8. After a prolonged succession of assaults, which lasted all day, the English retired, or rather fled, towards Lake George. Their loss had been so great, that they did not return to the charge. Abercrombie, renouncing the invasion of Central Canada, detached three thousand men towards Lake Ontario, who destroyed Fort Frontenac, a military and naval entrepôt of the French, established near the place where the St. Lawrence issues from this inland sea. The Governor of Canada had only been able to leave there a handful of men (the end of August).

Fort Duquesne also succumbed. A first English corps had been defeated. Preparations were made to renew the attack

Digitized by Google

with six thousand men; upon which, the defenders, reduced to five hundred, burned the fort,[1] and retired towards the Great Lakes (the end of November). The Valley of the Ohio was thus lost, and the communication was cut off between Canada and Louisiana. The intrepid valor of Montcalm and his companions in arms had again saved Canada for this year; but its bulwarks were fallen, and the heroes who defended it could only immortalize its approaching ruin.[2]

Everywhere England displayed that persevering activity which repaired past repulses and commenced triumphs. The French possessions in Africa were attacked in the spring of 1758. The French, whose factories extended along the Senegal three hundred leagues inland, had monopolized the gum-trade, and gained full preponderance on the coast of Guinea. An English expedition seized St. Louis in Senegal in the month of April. It was at first repulsed from the Island of Goree; but the attack was renewed in December with superior forces. Goree capitulated, and the French flag disappeared from this coast.

Events of far greater scope were transpiring in India. It is necessary to resume these events, full of thrilling and bitter interest to us, from the time of Dupleix's departure. This man seemed even greater absent than present, and every thing manifested in his absence the greatness and correctness of his designs. The shameful treaty of Godeheu had not been fully executed, either in consequence of the news from Europe and America, or because the English had violated it almost as soon as concluded by intervening in the Madura in behalf of their nabob of the Carnatic. Bussi remained, therefore, in the Deccan. It was the most important point, and every thing might still have been repaired. The year 1756 offered the French the most admirable opportunity to resume the plans of Dupleix. The Mogul Subahdar of Bengal, having quarrelled with the English, besieged and took Calcutta by assault, and expelled them from all Bengal (June, 1756). One of the three English presidencies of Hindostan, the one best situated for commerce and political action, was thus annihilated. The English East-India Company resolved on a last effort to recover Calcutta, and reëstablish its influence in Bengal. Clive was placed at the head of an armed expedition to Madras. Clive returned, and Dupleix gone,—it was the emblem of the fortune

[1] The English rebuilt it, and gave it the name of *Pittsbury* (the town of Pitt).

[2] Garneau, t. III. ch. iii.; Sainte-Croix, t. II. pp. 263–267; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 180; Continuation of Hume, book xxix.

Digitized by Google

of the two rival nations. The English squadron entered the Ganges at the close of the year, and retook Calcutta as early as January 2, 1757. The subahdar hastened thither with a body of troops, and entreated the assistance of the French at Chandernagore; but the spirit of Godeheu ruled among the agents of the company. The council of Chandernagore, although it knew that war was declared between France and England, still cherished the imbecile hope of the neutrality of India. Instead of supporting the Moguls, it agreed with Clive reciprocally to interdict all hostility in Bengal. The subahdar made peace with the English, and restored to them their factories and privileges. Clive then returned to attack Chandernagore, without caring for the agreement of neutrality. The English squadron brought its broadside to bear within pistol-shot of the ramparts, which it levelled with its fire. It was necessary to capitulate (March 14). The French, in their turn, were expelled from Bengal.

This was to Clive only a starting-point. As unscrupulous towards the Moguls as towards the French, he fomented a rebellion against the subahdar of Bengal, quarrelled with him, defeated him, overthrew him, and replaced him by the leader of the revolt (the end of June). Thenceforth Bengal belonged to the English. This was really the foundation of the English empire in India. Clive had comprehended and applied the system of Dupleix in behalf of England. Nothing was settled, however, so long as Bussi remained in the Deccan. At this very moment, summoned too late to the assistance of the Subahdar of Bengal, he took from the English Visingapatam, Madapollam, and their other factories on the coast of Orissa, and rendered himself the complete master of the maritime provinces which had been given him as fiefs by the Subahdar of the Deccan, and which separate Bengal from the coast of Coromandel.

Hostilities had recommenced in the Carnatic from 1756 to 1757. The French received in the summer of 1757 some reënforcements, which gave them the superiority, owing to the departure of Clive. They took several forts in the suburbs of Arcot and of Madras itself. Machault, before falling from the ministry, had prevailed upon the government to despatch a squadron to India. This squadron, which quitted Brest in May, 1757, did not reach the coast of the Carnatic till the end of April, 1758. It brought a new governor. Instead of sending back Dupleix, or choosing Bussi, the government despatched thither the Count de Lally-Tollendal, the son of an Irish refugee, a very brave officer, but devoid of all political talent,

Digitized by Google

absolutely ignorant of Indian affairs, and too stubborn and headstrong to take the pains to learn them. His system was that of La Bourdonnais, impaired by ignorance and obstinacy, — to apply himself exclusively to the destruction of the English settlements, with a brutal contempt for all diplomacy and for all native alliances. To this man were granted the resources which Dupleix never had at his disposal from 1747 to 1754. Lally was able to act on land and sea. He began by laying siege to St. David, while the squadron, under command of the Count d'Aché, engaged in a naval battle with the English who had returned from the Ganges. The English had seven ships of from fifty to sixty-six guns; the French, five ships of from fifty to seventy-four guns, and three frigates of from thirty-six to forty-four guns.[1] The French lost more men; but the English vessels suffered more (April 29, 1758). The French attained their end, since their adversaries were unable to molest the siege of St. David, which surrendered June 1. Devicotta also opened its gates.

It was a glorious beginning. Dupleix, for want of vessels, had lately failed in an attack on St. David; but the conduct of Lally towards the natives already endangered his military successes, and even the existence of the colony. He trampled under foot the customs of the race of all others most devoted to its traditions. In default of horses and oxen, he harnessed indiscriminately to his wagons and guns kshatriyas and sudras, Brahmins and pariahs. He demolished a celebrated pagoda, and broke its statues in search of imaginary treasures. Some of the Brahmins having returned to wander round their profaned temple, he took them for English spies, and caused them to be blown from the muzzles of the guns. The Hindoos, seized with horror, abandoned Pondicherry in a body, and fled to a distance thenceforth as soon they perceived the French.

Their desertion caused the failure of an expedition of Lally against Tanjore (July–August). At the moment of this repulse, Lally had just dealt an irreparable blow to the French power in India. He had recalled Bussi from the Deccan with the greater part of his troops, and had replaced him, in the circars of Orissa, by one of his creatures. It was the second act of the fall of Dupleix, and the disappearance of the last chance of France. The news of this act of madness was received by the English with boundless joy.

[1] Almost all these vessels belonged to the Indian Company.

Digitized by Google

A few successes in the Carnatic still kept up the illusion. The capital of this great nabobship, Arcot, surrendered to Lally: but he did not attack Chingleput in time, a town the capture of which would have involved the fall of Madras; and the English had leisure to fortify it. The want of resources retarded the attack on Madras, the chief aim of Lally, until the end of the year. The coffers of the company were empty, and private individuals did not supply the deficiency as in the times of Dupleix. Lally had made himself so much detested by his fits of passion and his arrogance, that scarcely any one was willing to coöperate in the success of his projects, however advantageous they might be to the national cause. Perseverance and energy could not, at least, be disputed him. He undertook at last, in December, 1758, with six thousand seven hundred French and sepoys, the siege of a town defended by four thousand regular troops, and protected without by flying camps of native horsemen, resting on the fortified town of Chingleput. The native town of Madras was occupied without resistance; but the English obstinately defended the *white town*, or Fort St. George, for two months. The besiegers, who had wasted the resources of the native town, speedily found themselves without provisions or money, while the besieged were provided with every thing. In the middle of February, 1759, the English squadron reappeared in the roadstead. The French squadron, very badly commanded, after a second indecisive battle, had retired to the Isle of France, and did not return in time. It was necessary to raise the siege. Godeheu and Lally had so utterly extinguished that public spirit raised so high by Dupleix, that there was as much rejoicing at the misfortune of Lally at Pondicherry as at Madras. The colony, like the governor, seemed seized with madness.

While Lally failed before Madras, the English from Bengal invaded the French provinces on the coast of Orissa. Bussi had vainly entreated Lally to suffer him to return to defend his conquests. The Franco-Indian troops of the Deccan, discouraged by the recall of their illustrous leader, were defeated, and driven back into Masulipatam. The general imposed on them by Lally, the Marquis de Conflans, surrendered at the moment when the Subahdar of the Deccan was marching to his aid, and when assistance was on its way to him from Pondicherry (April 4, 1759). The name of Conflans was destined twice in the same year to be fatal to the honor of France.

Digitized by Google

The subahdar treated with the English: the circars were lost, and the name of France disappeared from the Deccan, where it had ruled for ten years.

The issue of the conflict, concentrated thenceforth in the Carnatic, could not long be doubtful. The entire loss of India was approaching, like that of Canada. The defenders of Canada could, at least, render themselves this justice, — that they had done the greatest deeds with the feeblest means. In India, on the contrary, the most admirable chances of victory had been thrown to the winds by the folly of men.

France did not feel these disasters so keenly as she ought. Her attention was distracted from these distant events by nearer perils. William Pitt was boldly attacking her, not only in her colonies, but on her own territory. An English fleet had landed, June 5, 1758, from twelve to fourteen thousand men in the Bay of Cancale. This force seized St. Servan, a town which, separated from St. Malo by the mouth of the Rance, is, as it were, a suburb of St. Malo; and burned there a ship of fifty guns, two frigates, twenty-four privateers, and sixty merchant-vessels. St. Malo was too well armed to be captured by a sudden blow. The English reëmbarked, but only to menace the coast of Normandy. Great works had been commenced under the Cardinal de Fleuri at Cherbourg, in order to give France that military port in the Channel which had been so much desired by Colbert: then these works had been suspended through the negligence of the government. The place was open, and the forts unfinished. The English made a descent, on the 7th, at the west of the fort of Querqueville, entered Cherbourg without resistance on the 8th, threw the port into confusion, demolished the forts and moles, spiked or carried off the artillery, and burned twenty-seven merchant-vessels. A third descent was less skilfully planned. The English returned to St. Malo (September 4), hesitated anew to besiege it, and set about coasting along the shore to the west of the town, with no other end than pillage. The scattered troops in Brittany had time to concentrate; and, reënforced by the peasants, the citizens, and the scholars from the University of Rennes who had rushed to arms with Breton impetuosity, they encountered the enemy, September 11, as he was reëmbarking in the Bay of St. Cas. The Duke d'Aiguillon,[1] the Governor of Brittany, a personage destined to a deplorable renown, showed a hesitation far from honorable. A brave officer, D'Aubigni, opened the attack without orders. All

[1] Nephew of the Marshal de Richelieu.

Digitized by Google

followed him. In a few moments the rear guard of the English was broken, cut to pieces, or driven into the sea. It cost them, at least, three thousand men.

This successful conflict somewhat consoled French self-love, but did not compensate for our losses. Our maritime commerce was annihilated.[1]

The folly of the policy of Versailles was manifest to all eyes. The minister of foreign affairs, the Abbé de Bernis, was terrified at the misfortunes into which he had contributed to precipitate France. As early as the defeat of Rosbach, he had told the King frankly that it was impossible to continue the double continental and maritime war, and that France had neither generals nor money. He finally wrung from Louis a permission to negotiate. From that time, he was ruined in the favor of Madame de Pompadour. The favorite played the Roman heroine in the recesses of her alcove, and prided herself on remaining inflexible in her designs, in spite of the public wretchedness. An ambitious and enterprising spirit profited by this feeling to supplant Bernis. The Count de Stainville, of the House of Choiseul, had gained the favor of Madame de Pompadour by causing the failure of an intrigue, plotted by one of her relatives, to replace the Marchioness with the King. The grateful Marchioness had made Stainville ambassador to Rome, then to Vienna. He saw the Marchioness and *her friend* the Empress alike dissatisfied with the resolution to negotiate: he maintained that nothing rendered this necessary, and that resources could be found to continue the war. Madame de Pompadour, persuaded in advance, easily persuaded the King. Bernis received almost at the same time his dismissal, and the cardinal's hat as a consolation (November 1); and Stainville was summoned to Versailles to enter the ministry of foreign affairs. The King created him duke and peer, under the title of the Duke de Choiseul.[2]

This ministerial revolution was destined to have greater scope and duration than the preceding ones. The diplomatist who attained to power through the objectionable means of Madame de Pompadour and Austria, was, nevertheless, any thing but a vulgar intriguer. The Lorraine origin of his family, hereditarily devoted to the ancestors of the husband of Maria Theresa, in some degree excused

[1] *Mém. de Duclos*, p. 650; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 187; *Mercure historiq.*, t. CXLIV. p. 832, CXLV. pp. 31, 281, 383; Smollett, book xxviii.

[2] *Mém. de Duclos*, p. 631; *Mém. de madame du Hausset*, p. 82; Notice on Bernis by the Cardinal de Brienne, appended to Madame du Hausset, p. 203.

Digitized by Google

his first political bias. He was a singular character, a mixture of frivolity, rashness, penetration, and sometimes even profundity. With a mind full of brilliancy and fascination, and a lively and active intellect, devoid of principles and beliefs, he supplied the lack of morality, so far as it could be supplied, by loftiness of courage, and hatred of whatever was base and mediocre: he sincerely desired the regeneration of France, provided that it were by his hand. He would have been a remarkable man anywhere: before the pygmies of the court of Louis XV., he was a kind of great man. It is surprising that Louis XV., so malevolent towards all superior minds, should have accepted a man, who, from his entrance into the council, was a prime minister, in fact, under Queen Pompadour. The suspicion that Bernis aimed to become prime minister had contributed, quite as much as his opposition to the war, to decide his fall.

Choiseul signed, as his initiation-fee, a new secret treaty with Austria (December 30, 1758). Bernis had recently obtained the reduction of one-half of the subsidy promised by France to Maria Theresa. This subsidy was fixed at two hundred and eighty-eight thousand florins per month; France engaging to continue to keep one hundred thousand men on foot in Germany, besides paying alone both the Saxon corps in the service of the allies and the subsidy of the Swedes. It was agreed that Wesel, Geldern, and the countries conquered from the King of Prussia in Lower Germany, should be administered in the name of the Empress-Queen; that is, that the French conquests on the Lower Rhine should belong to Austria! The rest confirmed the previous compacts.[1]

This beginning seemed to announce that the protégé of the Emperor Francis of Lorraine and Maria Theresa would servilely follow the beaten track pursued by the government of France. It was not so. The engagements that had just been renewed with Austria were fulfilled: but Choiseul had comprehended the absurdity of the hopes founded on the invasion of Hanover, should it finally succeed; and, while continuing the war in the west of Germany, he embraced the bold project of grappling with England, and attacking her at home,—a project which Machault had been the first to conceive, and which was extolled by the Marshal de Belle-Isle. The success of a descent, effected with all the forces that France could concentrate, appeared to him less improbable than that of a war, pursued at a distance, on the seas,

[1] *Mém. de Duclos*, p. 688; Wenck, t. III. p. 185.

Digitized by Google

with squadrons almost everywhere inferior by one-half to those of the enemy.

From the beginning of 1759, great preparations were made in our ports on the ocean and the Channel. Numerous flat-boats, designed for the transportation of troops, were built at Dunkirk, Havre, Brest, and Rochefort. Two strong squadrons, fitted out at Toulon and Brest, were to unite to convoy the expedition, or rather the expeditions; for it was projected to make a descent at once in Scotland and in England. The design was admirable; but to what hands was its execution to be confided! The Duke d'Aiguillon, the victor, despite himself, at St. Cas, was to lead the twelve or fifteen thousand men destined for Scotland; and the vanquished of Rosbach, Soubise, was to command, by favor of Madame de Pompadour, the fifty thousand conquerors of England. We shall soon see the value of the commander of the fleet of Brest, the Count de Conflans, who had recently been made Marshal of France, apparently because the title of vice-admiral was not worthy of him. Choiseul might have dreamed of great things; but he was not permitted to choose the instruments capable of realizing them: what would have been only audacious in another situation, became insane.

Choiseul, meanwhile, passionately pursued his idea, and strove to secure the coöperation of the maritime States. There was no means of drawing in the timid Holland, irritated though she was at the acts of violence of England against her merchant-shipping. He succeeded no better with Spain, even by the offer of Minorca. The policy of Ferdinand VI., absolutely opposed to that of his father, and especially of his step-mother, the famous Elizabeth Farnese, was peace and neutrality. Mr. Pitt had, on his side, uselessly offered to restore Gibraltar to Spain if she would aid England in recovering Minorca. Choiseul hoped to be more successful with Russia and Sweden, who, both pledged to the French alliance on the continent, concluded, at this very moment, a remarkable compact to insure peace in the Baltic.[1] Choiseul was

[1] March 9, 1759. — Both powers engaged to oppose whomsoever might attempt to disturb maritime commerce. They prohibited nothing but what was contraband of war, and commerce with Prussian ports *actually* blockaded. With this exception, the commerce of Prussian subjects was not to be disturbed, or their merchandise captured; that is to say, *privateering* was interdicted. This was the most advanced treaty with respect to the rights of nations that had yet been made. Both powers agreed to unite their squadrons to interdict all entrance to the Baltic to foreign men-of-war. Denmark and France were to be invited to accede. Denmark acceded March 17, 1760. — *Recueil de Martens*, t. X. pp. 36, 42.

Digitized by Google

very desirous that twelve thousand Russians and twelve thousand Swedes should make a descent in Scotland; but Russia was by no means willing to enter into direct conflict with England, who kept her in a state of commercial dependence by buying her raw materials. Sweden was in the same position with respect to the iron and lumber trade. The president of the Swedish senate, who had been the real head of the government since the humiliation of the royalty, gave Choiseul hopes, but protracted the affair. Meanwhile the fate of Choiseul's plans was decided.[1]

The English did not await in their ports the threatened invasion. At the beginning of July, one of the five squadrons which they kept simultaneously on our coasts bombarded Havre, but without much damage, and without succeeding in burning the transports.[2] A larger squadron, in the month of June, had unsuccessfully threatened the roadstead and coast of Toulon. Maltreated by the coast batteries, it retired to Gibraltar for repairs. The French squadron of Toulon, commanded by M. de La Clue, neglected to take advantage of this opportunity to attempt the crossing of the strait, and did not cross it until the night of August 16–17. Whether from bad management, or from fatality, five of its twelve vessels separated from the rest, and anchored before Cadiz. The seven remaining ships, which had put farther out to sea, were followed and attacked the next day by the squadron of Gibraltar, fourteen ships strong, under the command of Boscawen. The captain of the *Centaure*, M. de Sabran, sacrificed himself to give the admiral time to effect his retreat: he fought for several hours alone against five ships, and surrendered only when sinking. This devotion did not save the squadron. The flagship had suffered greatly in the battle: three of the other vessels were slower sailers than the English. Overtaken by the enemy on the following morning, they stranded on the coast of Algarve. The English, without respecting either the law of nations or the neutrality of Portugal, which they were accustomed to treat as a vassal, attacked these ships under the guns of the Portuguese forts, burned two, and carried off the two others.

Despite this grave repulse, the cabinet of Versailles did not wholly abandon its designs: it renounced the great army of Soubise, but not the expedition of the Duke d'Aiguillon, which was to proceed to Scotland, by the way of St. George's Channel, under

[1] Flassan, t. VI. p. 146, *et seq.*

[2] *Archives du Havre*, t. I. p. 262, *et seq.*, ap. a manuscript journal by M. Millot, first alderman of Havre.

Digitized by Google

the protection of the fleet from Brest; while a small squadron, setting sail from Dunkirk, was to make a diversion in Ireland by the way of the north of Scotland. This project might have been effectual, had the troops and the transports been combined with the fleet in the roadstead of Brest; but the selfish vanity of the Duke d'Aiguillon had retained them in Morbihan, where he had the chief command, while at Brest he would have been subordinate to the Marshal de Conflans. The fleet, therefore, was obliged to go in search of the convoy. Despite this loss of time, Conflans might perhaps have succeeded by taking advantage of the tempest, which, at the beginning of November, dispersed the enemy's fleet that was cruising before Brest; but he did not set sail from Brest until the 14th. On the 20th, he was overtaken by Admiral Hawke off Belle-Isle. Conflans had twenty-one ships against twenty-three. There was nothing else to do than to meet the attack valiantly. He sought to avoid it by passing through the Cardinal Shoals, and entering with his fleet into the bay, full of islets and breakers, that forms the mouth of the Vilaine. Admiral Hawke, who was to the windward, intrepidly followed the French, at the risk of being destroyed with them in this species of maritime defiles. The commander of the French rear guard, Saint-André du Verger, repeated the devotion of the brave Sabran. He suffered destruction in order to arrest the enemy, and rendered himself illustrious by a glorious death. His crew were almost all killed when the flag was struck. The French ships, tossed about amidst the rocks by a tempestuous sea, ran against each other, without being able to manœuvre. Two were sunk: two more were wrecked on the reefs. Night suspended the disaster. At daybreak, Conflans stranded and burned his flag-ship and another vessel in the Bay of Croisic. Two English ships were lost on the sand-banks in attempting to pursue Conflans. The French advance guard, seven ships strong, had scarcely joined in the engagement, and might have avenged Saint-André, and repaired the disgrace of Conflans. Its leader, Beaufremont, thought only of making his escape, and took refuge at Rochefort. Another division of seven ships, by favor of the high tide, entered the Vilaine, which it had not been thought possible for frigates to penetrate: it saved itself in this manner, but could not go out again. The English resumed before the Vilaine and the Charente the blockade that they had maintained before Brest.

This deplorable catastrophe consummated the humiliation of France: the fleet, the honor of which had been until then intact,

Digitized by Google

fell to the level of the army. The corruption, effeminacy, and selfishness of the court had invaded the maritime after the military nobility.

The little squadron of Dunkirk had set out a month before the disaster of the Vilaine, under the command of an ex-privateer named Thurot, greatly dreaded by English commerce. This intrepid mariner, after divers adventures, effected his descent in Ireland in February, 1760, and took the town of Carrickfergus. It was truly a despairing blow, which could do nothing but sacrifice brave men. Thurot was killed, and his little squadron captured.[1]

The cabinet of Versailles, bending under these decisive reverses, renounced all maritime undertakings. Stroke after stroke of the saddest intelligence came from America.

There had been hitherto in the West Indies only a privateer warfare, greatly to the advantage of the French, with a few encounters of squadrons, without marked success on either side. In the middle of January, 1759, an English squadron of ten ships of the line, escorting an expedition of six thousand soldiers, attacked Martinique, the richest of the French Lesser Antilles, and the most important through its central position and its numerous and intrepid ship-owners. The English landed without much difficulty. The island was in a very bad posture of defence: nevertheless, a first attack against a height that overlooks Fort Royal having been repulsed by a body of militia destitute even of artillery, the English suddenly renounced their design, and reëmbarked to attack Guadeloupe (January 23, 24), where they were more successful. Their bomb-ketches reduced the town of Basse-Terre to ashes. They landed, and found the citadel abandoned. The Governor of Guadeloupe showed as little energy as talent; but the inhabitants supplied the deficiency. This brave population profited by the numerous accidents of ground offered by its island, and obstinately defended every hill, every defile, and every torrent. The struggle was prolonged for three whole months. The least assistance would have compelled the invaders to retreat. A squadron of nine ships had arrived at Martinique from Brest in the month of March: it remained there motionless for more than a month, and did not appear in sight of Guadeloupe until April 21. The inhabitants, driven from post to post, and reduced to extreme want, had capitulated that very day!

[1] *Mercure historiq.* t. CXLVII. pp. 298, 384; Sainte-Croix, t. II. p. 278 and documents; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 204; *Mém. de Duclos*, p. 658.

Digitized by Google

Desirade, Les Saintes, Petite-Terre, and Marie Galante followed the destiny of Guadeloupe.[1]

While Guadeloupe succumbed, the campaign reopened in Canada. The winter had passed away full of sombre presages for this valiant colony. To all its calamities was added discord, the too usual companion of misfortune. The general complained of the governor, the governor of the general: the latter too much accustomed, perhaps, to the regular wars of Europe, and not taking sufficiently into account the nature of the colonial elements, but, moreover, as upright and firm in mind as in heart; the former lacking the enlightenment and firmness necessary against the enormous abuses that fettered a defence already so difficult. Personally honest and sincere, M. de Vaudreuil was blinded by the intendant Bigot, who, leagued with the commissary-general and a whole faction of peculators, had built up, from year to year, his scandalous fortune and that of his accomplices on the public ruin. The waste had increased beyond measure, since, in 1757, the provisioning of the army, formerly under the direct administration of the government, had been put up for contract; that is, monopoly. The letters of exchange drawn on France threatened to amount to thirty millions for 1759. The expenses of Canada had already attained this sum the preceding year.[2] Meanwhile, without powerful assistance in soldiers, munitions, and vessels, the loss of Canada in this very campaign was imminent, as General Montcalm had explicitly announced to the minister of war in a long and sad letter, which was, so to speak, his testament and the testament of the colony.[3]

The ministry responded to this despairing appeal by utter abandonment. Choiseul was absorbed in his descent on England, and thought to save Canada at London. A letter from the minister of war, Belle-Isle, which crossed that of Montcalm on the way, is one of the most painful mementoes of those days of shame and delirium.

"I am very sorry to be obliged to send you word that you must

[1] *Mercure historiq.* t. CXLVII. p. 43; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 196; Continuation of Hume, book xxxi.

[2] Garneau, t. III. pp. 80, 282. The dearness of provisions in a country in which cultivation was almost abandoned must doubtless be taken into account in explaining so great an amount; but, according to Montcalm, the contractors made from a hundred to a hundred and fifty per cent profit. — See in Dussieux, *Le Canada sous la domination française*, p. 75, *et seq.*, the extracts from the correspondence of Montcalm, the commissary of war, Du Doreil, etc., who were unable to succeed in obtaining the recall of Bigot, supported by a powerful accomplice in the very cabinet of the minister.

[3] This letter, of April 12, 1759, is in the archives of the marine.

Digitized by Google

not hope for any reënforcements of troops. Besides the fact that they would increase the dearth of provisions which you have experienced only too much hitherto, there is great reason to fear that they would be intercepted by the English on the way; and, as the King could never send you assistance in proportion to the forces which the English are in a condition to oppose to you, the efforts that might be made here to procure them for you would have no other effect than to incite the ministry at London to make still greater ones to preserve the superiority which it has acquired on that part of the continent" (February 19, 1759).

In other despatches, the ministry even anticipated the event that the colony might be compelled to capitulate, and appeared to be resigned to it.[1]

The heroic Canadian population, abandoned by the mother-country, for which it immolated itself, did not think for a moment of laying down its arms. It rose in silence to the last man. The enemy was advancing from every side. In the preceding October, a treaty adroitly arranged by the leaders of the Anglo-Americans had deprived France of the greater part of her Indian allies: the *red-skins*, foreseeing the ruin of Canada, had not thought it incumbent on them to wait for the catastrophe to accept peace with the future conquerors. The change of attitude of the Indians gave great facilities for the invasion, for which preparations were made by four routes at once. Twenty ships of the line, and numerous transports escorting a convoy of ten thousand regular troops, under General Wolfe, a young man full of fire and energy, set sail from Louisburg, and ascended the St. Lawrence to Quebec. Twelve thousand soldiers and militia, under the commander-in-chief Amherst, moved to Lake George, from which they were to descend by Lake Champlain to the St. Lawrence. A third Anglo-Indian corps, under General Prideaux, was to take Niagara, and to march thence to Montreal to join the two others on the St. Lawrence. A fourth and weaker corps was commissioned to expel the French from Lake Ontario. All these made at least thirty thousand land forces and eighteen thousand soldiers and marines. Canada numbered scarcely five thousand soldiers and fifteen thousand inhabitants able to bear arms; that is, by arming the old men of sixty and the children of sixteen, less than one-third of the invading force!

Feeble detachments were despatched to the principal points of

[1] Garneau, t. III. p. 153; Report to the Minister on the Letters of Governor Vaudreuil, December 28, 1758; Manuscript in the Archives of the Marine.

Digitized by Google

the frontier; and the main body of the army was concentrated at Quebec, the principal aim of the enemy. All the male population came thither, abandoning their fields at the risk of dying of famine: the women and young children transported the provisions and munitions. By a supreme effort, thirteen or fourteen thousand men had been collected, three thousand of whom were regular troops and a few hundred Indians who remained faithful. The army posted itself on the left bank of the St. Lawrence, between the falls of the River Montmorency, which precipitates itself into the St. Lawrence by a leap of two hundred and sixty feet, and the valley of the River St. Charles, whence it protected the island from the river, on the eastern promontory of which Quebec is situated. The English fleet appeared before Quebec, June 25. It had avoided the banks and low grounds of the river, owing to the treason of a prisoner, an officer of the navy, who had served it as pilot. His name was Denis de Vitré. This was the only traitor that Canada produced.

The French endeavored in vain to burn the enemy's fleet with fire-ships and blazing rafts. The English succeeded better in burning Quebec: not daring to attack either the town or the camp in front, they made a descent upon the right bank of the St. Lawrence, and from there overwhelmed the town with their bombs, and devastated the distant country, — useless barbarities, which could not decide the fate of the war. They attempted again to reascend the river above Quebec in order to turn Montcalm's position. The breadth of the arm of the St. Lawrence between the right bank and the Island of Quebec permitted their fleet to pass, despite the batteries of the town; but they deemed the disembarkation in the rear of the French camp too difficult, and returned to the not less perilous plan of an attack in front. Protected by formidable artillery, they undertook to land on the left of the camp, and to force the fords of the Montmorency above and below the Great Fall. They were everywhere repulsed with loss (July 31). The carbines of our Canadian hunters triumphed over their cannon. General Wolfe despaired of success, and fell ill of chagrin.

The other English generals were more fortunate, and triumphed without glory through prodigious superiority of numbers. Twenty-six hundred French, that were defending Lakes George and Champlain against twelve thousand of the enemy, were compelled to blow up the forts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and to fall back to the northern extremity of Lake Champlain, where they

Digitized by Google

arrested General Amherst. A few hundred more saw themselves constrained to surrender the fort at Niagara after the little garrisons of the posts on the Great Lakes had been overpowered in attempting to succor them (July 25). All Ontario was in the power of the enemy.

A few troops were detached from the army of Quebec to support the handful of men that were defending the upper part of the St. Lawrence. Many of the Canadians, believing that Quebec was saved for this year, had returned to reap their harvests. The enemy, however, was preparing for a new effort. The lieutenants of Wolfe had advised him to attempt for the second time a disembarkation on the left bank, above the city. The English fleet again ascended the river several leagues. Montcalm detached Bougainville with three thousand men to observe the movements of the enemy. During the night of September 12–13, the English fleet suddenly fell back on Quebec, and landed the army in Foulon Bay, a quarter of a league above the city. The English scaled the precipices which had been thought inaccessible, and surprised our outposts. Montcalm hastened from the camp with only forty-five hundred men: it had been necessary to leave the camp supplied with troops, and Bougainville was at a distance. Montcalm charged on the English in order not to leave them time to intrench themselves. This precipitate attack made no impression on a body of from nine to ten thousand regular troops. The two generals, Wolfe and Montcalm, fell almost simultaneously, mortally wounded.[1] The French were driven back to the city. Colonel Bougainville, afterwards famous as a navigator,[2] returned too late to change the fate of the day: the council of war judged it impossible to renew the battle. The camp was evacuated, and the army fell back in the direction of the Three Rivers, leaving a garrison in Quebec. Three days after, by the entreaty of the principal lieutenant of Montcalm, — the Chevalier de Lévis, who had hastened from Montreal, — it moved forward, and was almost in sight of Quebec, when it learned that the commander had just capitulated, contrary to his instructions (September 18).

The Franco-Canadians retired to the River Jacques-Cartier. Nothing remained to them of this immense Canada but the coun-

[1] A granite obelisk is to be seen at Quebec, on the sides of which are engraved the names of Wolfe and Montcalm, with the following inscription: *Mortem virtus, communem famam historia, monumentum posteritas dedit.* (Their courage gave them the same death, history the same renown, posterity the same monument.)

[2] The two great navigators, Cooke and Bougainville, were found opposed to other in this campaign.

Digitized by Google

try enclosed between the north of Lake Champlain, the east of Lake Ontario, and the Three Rivers.

They did not dream of negotiating. They raised their voice for the last time to the mother-country. Three or four vessels loaded with munitions were sent them, which were taken by the English, and their letters of exchange were not paid. The government owed them more than forty millions!

Three armies were about to close in upon and overpower them. They anticipated the stroke by a sudden attack on Quebec. The winter had given them some months' respite. April 20, 1760, as soon as the St. Lawrence had begun to thaw a little, General de Lévis moved by land and water with seven thousand men. On the 25th, his little army assembled on the left bank: it crossed the River Cape Rouge by a skilful manœuvre, and forced the English outposts to fall back. The commandant of Quebec, General Murray, rapidly moved forward with six thousand soldiers and twenty-two guns, and attacked the French on the march, and without their artillery, which was in the rear with a reserve. M. de Lévis formed his troops under a murderous fire, broke the English, utterly routed them, and took their guns (April 28). Had not the French been worn out with fatigue, they would probably have entered Quebec pell-mell with their enemies. They were forced to undertake a siege, with field-pieces as their only resource against the powerful artillery of the ramparts. The Canadians imagined that artillery was about to be sent them from France, and kept their eyes constantly turned towards the mouth of the St. Lawrence. The vessels that appeared were English (May 9–15).

The siege was raised; all was lost. The Canadians prolonged the struggle some months longer. Two hundred men shut up in Fort Lévis, on the upper part of the St. Lawrence, arrested for twelve days the eleven thousand soldiers of General Amherst! The three armies of the enemy joined each other at length, September 6–8, before Montreal, an almost defenceless place, in which were concentrated the wrecks of Canada. September 8, 1760, the capitulation was signed which effaced New France from the map of the globe. The Canadians kept their property and their religion, and acknowledged themselves subjects of the King of England. The principal inhabitants expatriated themselves with the three thousand soldiers and sailors that were sent back to France.

Thus fell this race of men whom the habit of living in the bosom of the rugged Nature of the North had rendered as strong and

Digitized by Google

simple as the ancients. In India there were a few great men to be admired: here it was a whole people that was great. The monarchy had neither known how to develop Canada nor to defend it. The fall of Canada, celebrated by the English with such enthusiasm, prepared avengers for the vanquished in their own conquerors: the expansion which it gave to the power and pride of the Anglo-Americans ripened them for independence. The fall of New France gave a world to England, but gave it to her only for a little while.[1]

It is painful to tear ourselves from the spectacle of these glorious misfortunes to return to the mad continental war which had been their cause.

Westphalia and Hesse were annually swallowing up thousands of our soldiers, without our being further advanced at the end of the campaign than at the beginning; the superiority of the enemy's generals compensating for the numerical superiority of our troops. At the close of 1758, the principal French army had remained on the Lower Rhine; the other corps, on the Lower Main. Towards spring, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick sought to profit by this separation to overpower the smaller and more advanced of the two armies, and fell with all his forces upon the French encamped at Bergen, opposite Frankfort. Soubise no longer commanded the army of Hesse: he had been recalled to take command of the *army of England*. His successor, the lieutenant-general Duke de Broglie, had chosen an excellent position; and Ferdinand of Brunswick was repulsed with considerable loss, although he had greatly the advantage in numbers. This was the first check that he had experienced in person (April 13, 1759).

This beginning was promising: the government seemed to desire to support it. The Marshal de Contades took command of the two French armies united, invaded Hesse, and moved to the Weser to cut off the army of the enemy from Hanover. Ferdinand of Bruns-

[1] Garneau, *Hist. du Canada*, t. III. liv. x. — We do not quit without emotion this *History of Canada*, which has come to us from the other hemisphere as a living testimony of the sentiments and traditions preserved among the French of the New World after a century of foreign rule. May the genius of our race continue to subsist among our brethren of Canada in their future destinies, whatever may be their relations with the great Anglo-American federation, and preserve a place in America for the French element! — See also Dussieux, *le Canada sous la domination française*, liv. iii., xlvi.-l. A grand-nephew of Montcalm, the Marquis d'Espeuilles, has collected documents concerning the life of his grand-uncle and the whole Canadian war, the publication of which will be highly interesting, and among which figures a journal written by Bougainville. — Continuation of Hume, book xxxi.; *Mercure historiq.* t. CXLVI.-CXLIX.; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 199.

Digitized by Google

wick hastened to post himself in front of the French, near Minden, and strove to make them attack him. Contades, much superior in fact to the enemy, descended to the plain. Ferdinand had caused the village of Todtenhausen, a little too far in advance of his lines, to be intrenched, and occupied by an infantry corps. Had the Duke de Broglie, the commander of the right wing, executed Contades' instructions, and attacked the village at daybreak, he would probably have carried it, and have greatly endangered Ferdinand; but Broglie hesitated, pretended that the whole army of the enemy was behind Todtenhausen, and went in quest of new instructions. Contades, a cabinet general without quickness of perception or decision, lost time in deliberating. The enemy, meanwhile, advanced, formed, and took the offensive against the other wing and the centre of the French. The French cavalry, confusedly precipitated forward, without unity, and in such a way as to mask our guns, were put to rout by the fire of the enemy's infantry and artillery. Part of our infantry was broken in turn. Contades ordered a retreat (August 1). The alleged cause of the defeat was worse than the defeat itself. Contades accused Broglie of having voluntarily caused him to lose the battle by not attacking in time; and, unhappily, the accusation was not absolutely absurd: it is certain at least that Broglie aimed at supplanting his superior, and that he succeeded. In this almost universal demoralization, the selfish ambition of generals might well have terrible results: already the Count de Maillebois had been strongly suspected of having sought to cause the Marshal d'Estrées to lose the battle of Hastenbeck.[1]

Contades, discouraged, made no effort to repair his repulse, abandoned almost all Westphalia and Hesse, and did not pause until behind the Lahn, near Giessen, almost at the point from which he had set out. Ferdinand of Brunswick was able at his ease to detach large bodies of troops, who defeated the Würtembergers, the allies of France and Austria, and went to the assistance of the King of Prussia.[2]

Frederick had been less successful than Ferdinand: his genius and strength seemed exhausted in the colossal struggle that he

[1] Neither was this criminal jealousy unknown in the enemy's army. Lord Sackville, the general of the Anglo-Hanoverian cavalry, was accused of having prevented Prince Ferdinand from completing his victory by not executing the order to charge the French in their retreat. Lord Sackville was recalled, and degraded by a council of war.

[2] Frederick II., *Guerre de Sept Ans*, t. II. ch. x.; *Mém. de Napoléon*, t. VII.; *Précis*, etc., ch. v.; *Mém de Rochambeau*, p. 130.

Digitized by Google

was sustaining. Posted in the spring on the confines of Brandenburg and Silesia, between the Russians quartered in Poland and the Austrians wintered in Bohemia, he had made no attempt to compel the Austrians to fight before the Russians reëntered the field. In July, the Russians concentrated at Posen, and moved forward. The Austrians entered Lusatia in order to assist the Russians in Brandenburg. July 23, the Prussian army corps that was confronting the Russians experienced a defeat between Züllichau and Crossen. Frederick left the main body of his army of Silesia with his brother, Henry of Prussia, and hastened with a reënforcement to join the defeated army, but could not prevent the Austrian general Laudon from carrying to the Russian, Soltikoff, a large corps detached from the army of Daun. The King of Prussia, nevertheless, attacked more than eighty thousand men with from forty to forty-five thousand. He flanked and forced a part of the Russian positions, with a terrible massacre of their infantry; then failed before another post defended by the Austrian, Laudon: the Russians rallied, and the Prussians were broken and utterly routed (August 13). By Frederick's own confession, Prussia would have been lost at that moment, had the Russians known how to profit by their costly victory of Kunnersdorf. Happily for the Prussians, Soltikoff declared that he had done enough, and that it was Marshal Daun's turn to sacrifice his Austrians. Soltikoff knew the passionate admiration of the heir presumptive of Russia, the Grand Duke, for the King of Prussia, and feared making an irreconcilable enemy of his future master should he cause the destruction of the great Frederick.

The Austrians did not altogether waste their time: reënforced by the contingents of the Empire, they retook almost all Saxony, and finally Dresden, September 3; but they did not make a diversion against Berlin, as they might have done, while Frederick was rallying before the Russians the remains of his army. Soltikoff operated so tamely in Brandenburg, Lusatia, and Silesia, that Frederick, with a handful of soldiers, forced him at last to return to Poland to winter, without keeping a single Prussian place.

The army of Silesia, meanwhile, sought to recover Saxony from the Austrians. Frederick repaired thither in November, and threw a corps of eighteen thousand men upon the rear of Daun to disquiet him concerning his communications, and oblige him to return to Bohemia. The Prussian corps, which ventured much too far from the King's line of operations, was hemmed in by thirty or forty thousand Austrians, and laid down its arms in a

Digitized by Google

body, like the Saxons latterly at Pirna (November 20). This disaster secured to the Austrians Dresden and half of Saxony; but Frederick, succored in time by a strong detachment from the Hanoverian army, intrepidly quartered himself in front of the enemy in the heart of the country which was disputed with him.

It seemed impossible for Frederick to sustain another similar campaign without succumbing. Though his courage remained unshaken, his body was becoming worn out by this terrible life, and his kingdom was wearing out like his person. It is difficult to comprehend how he succeeded in reorganizing his army each year, and, above all, in subsisting it.

Thus, by the mockery of fate, the Austrian war, of which the French monarchy had made itself the auxiliary, appeared destined finally to succeed by dint of men, of blood, and of obstinacy; while the French war ended only in a series of constantly increasing disasters.

The means of sustaining these two wars, the one so unfortunate, the other so insane and shameful, were diminishing daily. The state of the French finances was appalling. According to a statement rendered to the King by the comptroller-general Boulogne in 1758, the people paid to the State, the farmers-general, the clergy, and the seigniors, about four hundred and seventeen millions, without including the ecclesiastical tithe, and part of the feudal tributes and municipal and provincial taxes, which would add, it was said, more than eighty millions. This estimate was evidently far below the truth: M. de Boulogne estimated the profits of the farmers-general and their employés, and the expenses of administrating, at only twenty-six million seven hundred thousand francs. This cannot be taken in earnest.[1] However it may be, the ordinary revenue of the State, in 1758, was two hundred and thirty-six millions, not including one hundred and two millions of revenues alienated for a time, or in perpetuity. By adding certain sources of revenues, the nature of which is not explained to us, the receipts of 1759 were estimated in advance at two hundred and eighty-five millions; the projected

[1] The ecclesiastical perquisites are estimated at only three million five hundred thousand francs, which is still less probable. The annats, dispensations, etc., yielded, it is said, three million six hundred thousand francs to the court of Rome. The clergy concealed the real amount of their revenue as well as they could. The tithe, of itself alone, cost the people at least a hundred and twenty millions, expenses included. To appreciate relatively the weight of the popular burden, it is necessary to take into account not only the abolition of privileges, not only the enormous increase of wealth and population, but the immense depreciation of the precious metals.

Digitized by Google

expenditure, at four hundred and eighteen millions. There was, therefore, a deficit foreseen of one hundred and thirty-three millions. It went far beyond this. The expenditure exceeded five hundred and three millions; and the deficit, two hundred and seventeen millions. More than one hundred millions of the general receipts were consumed in advance, and more than one hundred and fifty millions were due to the receivers-general and the farmers on the preceding years. The extraordinary affairs, loans, lotteries, and life-*rentes*, in 1757, had amounted to one hundred and thirty-six millions: there had been less of these in 1758.[1] This resource was becoming exhausted: the loans, however seductive the form, and however high the interest, were no longer taken. On the other hand, it was impossible to increase either the villain-taxes or the aids without driving the people to despair.

The comptroller-general Boulogne could go no farther. He was replaced by a man of expedients, M. de Silhouette, on whom great hopes were founded (March, 1759), and who began by creating seventy-two thousand shares of one thousand francs on the farms, conferring on the shareholders one-half of the profits made by the company of the farmers-general. The State, in this manner, really made the farmers-general bankrupt; but public opinion was not disposed to take the part of these publicans enriched by the spoils of the people, and whose unbridled luxury presented so shocking a contrast to the distress of the provinces.[2] The seventy-two thousand shares were subscribed for without scruple. An operation of the same kind was effected on the farming of the mails. Silhouette suspended, for the time of the war and two years after, the exemption of officials from the villain-tax, with the exception of the members of the superior courts and the bureaus of finance, and the military officers. Another declaration prescribed the revision of the pensions, and their reduction to the sum total of three millions, not including the pensions of the princes of the blood, those granted to military men as supplementary to their pay, or annexed to the posts of divers

[1] In 1758, the assembly of the clergy gave sixteen millions, the result of the promises made to pay for the abandonment of the plans of Machault. The government exacted a gratuity for six years from all the towns, faubourgs, and burghs. — See *Journal de Louis XV.* t. II. p. 148; *Anciennes Lois françaises*, t. XXII. p. 279.

[2] The bankruptcy was not for fifty per cent, as it would seem; for Silhouette rid the farmers of a host of pensions, and interest on fictitious capital, with which favor and intrigue had burdened them.

Digitized by Google

officers of the superior courts, those of the academies, faculties, etc. (April 17).

The public applauded: the courtiers dared not clamor; but they did better, as we shall see. The court reputed reformed, Silhouette undertook to reform the King himself. He entreated Louis to set his subjects the example of the sacrifices which he imposed on them; and proposed, as a beginning, the reformation of the fund set apart for the King's play. Louis did not absolutely refuse at first; "but the minister of foreign affairs (Choiseul), seeing that the King's lack of occupation, for want of play, was about to break up the circle around his Majesty, offered to take from the funds of the department of foreign affairs the sum necessary for play, which was accepted. It was the same with most of the other plans of reform."[1] The declaration concerning the pensions shared the same fate with the rest.

"The reforms, moreover, could only reach the obvious expenditures. All the foresight and economy of the most able minister must have failed in the presence of the constantly increasing prodigiousness of the expenditures concealed under the veil of the royal orders on the treasury; the disposal of which, abandoned in some sort to a favorite, served to maintain her prodigality. The royal orders on the treasury, which, twenty years before, varied from twenty to thirty millions, at the epoch of the reforms proposed by M. de Silhouette exceeded one hundred and seventeen millions.[2] It need not be said that Madame de Pompadour and the Parc-aux-Cerfs did not cost one hundred and seventeen millions a year:[3] but the royal orders on the treasury covered all the irregular unclassified expenses, thrown from one branch of the service upon another; a chaos in which none could find his way, and against which the chamber of accounts unceasingly protested. It was not, moreover, for his mistresses alone that Louis XV. drew upon the treasury (*Épargne-savings*), so misnamed; but also

[1] Monthion, *Particularités sur les Ministres des finances*, art. SILHOUETTE; *Mercure historiq.* t. CXLVI. p. 523.

[2] Bailli, *Hist. financière de la France*, t. II. p. 142; *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 125.

[3] Nor probably ever even one hundred and seventeen millions in all. According to the *Relevé des dépenses de madame de Pompadour*, published by M. le Roi, city librarian of Versailles (Paris, Dumoulin, in 8vo), Madame de Pompadour's personal expenses amounted in all to thirty-seven millions during *her reign*. — See also an article by M. L. Lacour on the *Parc-aux-Cerfs*, in the *Revue française* of October 20, 1858. The *Parc-aux-Cerfs* had not the importance that is commonly attributed to it; but under this name, which has become typical, is confounded all the secret debauchery of Louis XV.

Digitized by Google

for his privy purse, which he increased to the best of his ability, like a prudent citizen:[1] it was all that was left him of the maxims of economy taught by Fleuri. He had taken the keepership of the seals in order to appropriate to himself the perquisites. Never before had a king of France been seen accumulating a private fortune: no symptom, perhaps, announced in so striking a manner the moral ruin of royalty. We shall soon see the successor of Louis the Great figuring among the most shameless speculators of his kingdom!

The comptroller-general was obliged to have recourse to new taxes. He strove to render them as little onerous as possible to the suffering classes. He procured the decree of a general proportional subsidy on all revenues, whether from real estate or personal property, without exception. It was still the same idea, the income tithe of Vauban, resumed in turn by Desmaretz, Fleuri, and Machault, always added to the existing taxes, contrary to the principle of Vauban, and always repulsed or perverted in its application by the resistance of the privileged classes. Silhouette at least intended, in the future, to lighten the subsidy, the villain-tax, and other established taxes. To the subsidy were joined taxes on domestics, and servants in livery, horses, carriages, and the manufacture and sale of articles of luxury or ornament, on their entrance into the towns. This was a means of reaching the magnificence of the great cities, and the fortunes in paper, "too much increased by the loans," says the minister in his report to the King. Unmarried men were to pay a triple capitation-tax. Parents whose children entered a religious order before attaining majority were to purchase a license from the King.

By the side of equitable and well-conceived innovations, other measures too much resembled the injurious fiscal routine practices. Such were the creations of offices, onerous to the public, and contrary to the rights of the possessors of similar places already existing; the attribution to the King of the *octrois* of the towns; duties on shops; and letters of mastership in trade corporations. Lastly, there were provisions, rigorous for a few, as the abolition of many petty offices at Paris, in consideration of a trifling indemnity; or for all, as a new duty of ten per cent on foreign merchandise, coffee-houses, etc., and the establishment of four sous per livre on all articles of consumption.[2]

[1] When he lost at play, he replaced his loss from the public treasury. A piquant illustration of his good private management is related. "Do not invest with the King," he said one day to his steward: "it is said that he is not safe."

[2] *Mém.* of Silhouette to the King, in the *Comptes-rendus de* 1758–1787; *Mercure his-*

Digitized by Google

These extraordinary edicts were received with the most virulent opposition. The privileged classes opposed them less for what was objectionable in them than for their justice: the people saw in them only the new subsidy, which they were about to be forced to pay, and the four sous a livre. The parliament presented remonstrance after remonstrance. The King imposed the reg stration on it in a bed of justice (September 20). The parliament protested anew, sustained by the other superior courts of Paris and the provincial parliaments. The King hesitated, and granted suspensions to certain interests menaced by the edicts. It was evident that he would recede with respect to the rest. At each encounter with the parliament, royalty lost ground. Silhouette, seeing his plans failing, having nothing to expect from the financiers whom he had treated so harshly, and no longer knowing how to provide for the payment of the troops, plunged into the most desperate and fatal expedients. He suspended, for the duration of the war, the payment of the letters of exchange registered by the colonial treasurers, and, for a year, the reimbursement of the advances on the general receipts and the notes on the farms: he violated the public deposits, and postponed till the recurrence of peace the reimbursements that were to be effected by the royal treasury and the sinking fund; that is, all payments were suspended, except of the *rentes*, which interested too many people.[1] The government thus rid itself temporarily by this expeditious means of an exigible debt of one hundred and eighty-nine millions; but thereby it dealt the last blow to the unhappy Canadians, and destroyed all credit at home. Six bankers, who, at the beginning of the year, had negotiated with the King to advance three million five hundred thousand francs a month to the marine and the fortifications, to be paid with rescripts on the general receipts, were obliged to obtain writs to stay the proceedings of their creditors. The creditors became bankrupt; and, from step to step, all the commercial classes were thrown into disorder. The sending of the King's plate to the mint, with a request to private individuals to do the same, was a very poor resource in such a crisis.

The public clamor broke forth against Silhouette. He was loaded with derision.[2] The court sacrificed him, and gave him as

toriq. t. CXLVII. p. 391, CXLVIII. p. 45. The city post was established in Paris in July, 1759.

[1] *Mercure hist.* t. CXLVII. p. 538. "To suspend the payment of the *rentes* . . . would occasion a revolution." — Letter from the Duke de Choiseul to the French Ambassador to Madrid, ap. Flassan, t. VI. p. 279.

[2] Portraits were made *à la Silhouette*, or in skeleton; breeches *à la Silhouette*,

Digitized by Google

a successor the lieutenant of police, Bertin (November 21), who found the royal treasury empty, and the fund of 1760 consumed in advance. The money to provide for the first necessities was loaned by the Prince de Conti, then by the King himself, who consented to advance two millions from his privy purse. Bertin emitted three millions of life-*rentes*, in the form of a tontine, on the capital value of thirty millions; obtained some money from the farmers-general, satisfied with the fall of Silhouette; and compounded with the parliament with respect to the extraordinary edicts of his predecessor. The taxes on articles of luxury, and various other duties, were revoked. The four sous a livre were reduced to a single one. Instead of the general subsidy, a third twentieth was established, in the form of the two others, that is, with redemptions, commutations, etc., which lightened the burdens of the rich at the expense of the poor: and the capitation-tax was doubled, and was even tripled for officers of finance and farmers of the revenue, — all for two years only; at least, so it was announced.[1] The parliament, whose self-love was satisfied, made the registration without much objection (March 3, 1760).

Bertin next sought to revive credit in some degree by fixing a limit for the reimbursement of the notes on the farms and those on the general receipts, and by causing the payments to be resumed, at least in part (March 11-17). May 18, he emitted a loan of fifty millions, reimbursable by series in ten years; the stock being purchasable, two-fifths in cash, and three-fifths in royal funds. The royal funds being greatly depreciated, this was a great advantage offered to the lenders. By such means, the government succeeded, not in living, but in not dying, in vegetating from day to day.

Louis XV., launched by the rancor of his favorite and himself into a desperate struggle so contrary to his nature, had begun for some time to be dismayed, and, above all, to be weary. Bernis had no sooner been hurled from the ministry for appearing too pacific than the King showed himself less opposed to peace.

or without pockets. — *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 226. Every thing good that had been done or attempted under Silhouette's ministry belonged less to the comptroller-general than to his chief clerk, the learned and patriotic author of the *Recherches sur les finances de la France*, — Véron de Forbonnais. Involved in the disgrace of his minister, Forbonnais retired to the country, and purchased the place of parliamentary counsellor at Metz. He began by renouncing the privileges conferred by his new office, and publicly certified his property subject to the villain-tax.

[1] *Mercure hist.* t. CXLVIII. p. 292. In 1761, this increase of taxes was extended to the years 1762 and 1763.

Digitized by Google

Choiseul himself, the object of his ambition once attained, had greatly moderated his devotion to Austria. He had too much intelligence not to understand the true character of the situation;[1] and he had sufficient adroitness to insinuate to Madame de Pompadour, without alienating her, the truths that had destroyed Bernis. Even before the great reverses of 1759, it was therefore agreed at Versailles that peace was desirable; but the *Marchioness* by no means intended to lose the affection of her *friend*, the Empress-Queen. It was resolved not to mix the two questions of peace with England and peace with Prussia; and an effort was made to cause these two questions to be decided, the one by the Russian mediation, the other by the Spanish mediation. The Czarina had disclosed some weariness of the war; and it was hoped secretly to induce her to become, from a belligerent, a pacificatory power. As to Spain, King Ferdinand VI., a hypochrondriac and maniac like his father Philip V., and, like him, governed by his wife, had died August 10, 1759, and had been succeeded by his half-brother, Carlos III., the King of Naples, who, with the consent of Austria, had transmitted his former kingdom to his third son, the eldest being an idiot, and the second becoming the Prince of Asturias. The court of France expected much more from Carlos than from Ferdinand. It counted on a very active and friendly mediation, with a threat of intervention in prospective.

It failed on the side of Russia. The victories of the Russians in the summer of 1759 had changed the disposition of this court; and Choiseul was greatly alarmed at receiving a memorial addressed to the cabinets of Versailles and Vienna, dated October 26, by which Russia demanded nothing less than the cession of the kingdom of Prussia (or ducal Prussia) as an indemnity for the costs of the war. A few months after (March 21, 1760), the alliance, concluded in 1746 for twenty-five years between Austria and Russia, was renewed for twenty years, as well as the clause of solidarity against Turkey. Austria engaged to serve the patri-

[1] See his letter to the ambassador from France to Spain, December 24, 1759: "We are fully conscious . . . that it is not to our interest for the King of Prussia to be wholly destroyed," in Flassan, t. VI. p. 132.

[2] The consent of Austria was necessary, because the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had provided, that, in the event that the King of Naples became the King of Spain, Naples should be transferred to the Infant, Duke of Parma; and Parma to Austria. Austria *momentarily* renounced Parma in consequence of her treaties with France. The new King of Naples, a child of eight, was Ferdinand VI., the docile husband of the too famous Caroline of Austria.

Digitized by Google

monial interests of the branch of Schleswig Holstein Gottorp,[1] to which the throne of Russia was promised after Elizabeth. Austria, in the event of recovering Silesia, guaranteed by a secret article the kingdom of Prussia to Russia, who was empowered to cede it to Poland *in consideration of arrangements mutually agreeable;* that is, in consideration of cessions of territory in the direction of the Ukraine.

The Austrian government was entering farther and farther into the part that it played for nearly a century,—that of introducing Russia into the heart of Europe.

Choiseul, although ignorant of the secret article, judged rightly of the Russian policy, and what was to be apprehended from it. His instructions to the French ambassador at St. Petersburg are of great interest.[2] Unhappily, he had more sagacity in divining Russia than perseverance in opposing her system.

[1] That is, the pretensions of this branch to Schleswig-Holstein. — See Garden, t. V.; and Martens, t. X. pp. 45–60.

[2] In June, 1759, he had given very strange instructions to the French ambassador to Poland. The Marquis d'Argenson had lately projected the extrication of Poland from *anarchy:* the means of which he dreamed (the Saxon royalty) was very questionable; but the intention was excellent. Choiseul, on his side, designed to maintain this same *anarchy,* and to prevent every thing that could destroy "the blindness of the government of Poland, and give it consistency," while also preventing any power from aggrandizing itself at the expense of Poland. — See Flassan, t. VI. pp. 136–140. Were no other monuments of Choiseul's policy known, he would be taken not only for the most dishonorable, but the most insane, of ministers.. How hope to save the integrity of Poland by perpetuating anarchy therein? and what interest had France in preventing a *consistent* State, a *bonâ-fide* government, from being formed between Austria and Russia, capable of serving as a counterpoise to them? It is to be remarked, that Chesterfield expresses himself in absolutely the same manner from the English point of view. It certainly was not even to the evident interest of England! But as to France, the geographical position of Poland did not permit the supposition of any occasion of conflict between the latter and ourselves. In this same document, it is seen that Choiseul systematically closes his eyes to the excesses and tyranny of the Russian army in Poland: he enjoins on his envoy to labor to prevent all confederation against the Russians, and not to receive the complaints of the Poles. The language of Choiseul is greatly changed in his instructions to the French ambassador to Russia in March, 1760. It is difficult to comprehend that the two papers were from the same hand. In this, Choiseul points out with superior sagacity the progress of the Russian power, almost doubled since the death of Peter I.; the danger that there was in introducing Russian armies into Germany, of which the Empress-Queen or her successors might one day repent; the encroaching and despotic spirit of Russia towards her neighbors, and the formidableness of her system of conduct and her wholly aggressive organization. "A plan of policy was long since fully formed at St. Petersburg, from which she will not deviate; . . . but which she will only develop successively, and in proportion as circumstances and events furnish her the occasion. Her ministers, distrustful and suspicious, join to the dissimulation natural to their nation the most methodical consistency in their conversation, writings, and movements." — See Flassan, t. VI. pp. 211–215. The conclusion urges the opposition of all aggrandizement of Russia.

Digitized by Google

The cabinet of Madrid was better disposed than that of St. Petersburg to serve the plans of Choiseul. Carlos III. proposed his mediation between France and England. Mr. Pitt refused it. He told the Spanish ambassador plainly that England still needed to extend her conquests in order to extend her trade, and that, since fortune favored her, she should profit by her advantages to despoil and humiliate her rival.[1] Towards the close of 1759, however, at the solicitation of Frederick, Mr. Pitt consented that a proposal for a congress should be lodged, in behalf of England and Prussia, in the hands of the States-General, at the Hague. The English ambassador in Holland made overtures in the same direction to the French ambassador. The cabinet of Versailles persisted in the plan that it had formed of treating separately with England, maintaining that the congress, the idea of which was not rejected by it or its allies, should only regulate the differences between Austria and Prussia. The overtures remained ineffectual. Mr. Pitt, moreover, would have made impossible conditions. He did not desire peace.

The allied courts resolved to make a great effort to overpower Prussia and Hanover. Frederick, reduced to less than a hundred thousand soldiers, in great part recruits of a few weeks, had to face nearly two hundred thousand Austrians, Russians, and Imperialists. The French army was raised to a hundred and twenty thousand men: Ferdinand of Brunswick had scarcely seventy thousand, including from twenty to twenty-five thousand English.

The monotonous carnage of the preceding year commenced anew in the spring. Six army corps were opposed to each other in Eastern Germany: Frederick was in Saxony, confronting Marshal Daun; Prince Henry of Prussia, in the north-east of Silesia, held the Russians in check; lastly, the little Prussian corps of Fouquet, in the west of this province, had to deal with the Austrian corps, four times as numerous, of General Laudon. General Fouquet was overpowered at Landshut, and obliged to lay down his arms (June 23, 1760). It was the design of the enemies' generals to assemble their forces upon the Oder. Frederick sought

It is seen from the private correspondence of Louis XV., that Louis strove to inspire Choiseul with more favorable sentiments towards Poland. — *Ibid.* p. 373. This King, whom history stigmatizes for having suffered the partition of Poland to be accomplished, understood the necessity of protecting her, and always had a feeble liking for her; but, from a feeble liking to action, there was a distance that Louis never knew how to cross when doing good was in question.

[1] Flassan, t. VI. p. 280.

Digitized by Google

to prevent them by a diversion against Dresden. Daun compelled him to raise the siege. Meanwhile Laudon took Glatz, and threatened Breslau. Frederick hastened to Silesia, was followed by Daun, and was shut in between this general and Laudon. He passed through the corps of Laudon (August 15), and effected his junction with his brother Henry, who had repulsed the Russians.

Meanwhile all Saxony, forcibly stripped of troops by Frederick, had been taken from the Prussians by the troops of the Circles. Still worse tidings soon reached Frederick, — the march of the Russians on Berlin. They had returned to Poland only to precipitate themselves upon Brandenburg, where they were joined by an Austrian corps. The sick, wounded, and recruits, who were stationed in Brandenburg, were unable to arrest them: the capital of Frederick was forced not only for the second time to ransom itself from pillage, but to open its gates, and submit to the exactions and ravages of the Austro-Russians (October 3). The enemy, nevertheless, evacuated Berlin on the rumor of the arrival of Frederick on the Elbe; but the Austro-Russian generals formed the project of taking up their winter-quarters along this river, and thus cutting off Frederick from his hereditary dominions. The King of Prussia would have been lost, had this plan been realized. He could only prevent it by striking a great blow. November 3, he fell with all his combined forces upon the army of Daun, posted near Torgau, on the Elbe. The armies were almost equal. Frederick imitated the rash manœuvre of Prince Ferdinand at Crefeld, and separated his army into two parts in order to fall on the Austrians in the rear. He was well-nigh overpowered in detail: success, however, justified him. The Austrians lost the battle-field and the left bank of the Elbe.[1] The Russians, as soon as they knew of the defeat of their allies, returned to winter in Poland; and almost all Saxony fell again into the hands of Frederick, who thus ended to his advantage a campaign that had seemed destined to consummate his ruin.

The French armies, by way of compensation, had somewhat retrieved their character, although the result did not correspond sufficiently to the great superiority of strength. The Duke de Broglie had attained his ends: he had obtained the marshal's bâton and the chief command of the two armies of the Main and the Lower Rhine. The principal forces had been massed on the

[1] One of the most striking features of this battle, as, moreover, of all of this war, was the prodigious quantity of field-artillery. The proportion of it was much larger than now; but it was not massed and movable as at present: each battalion had its pieces.

Digitized by Google

Main; and the army of the Rhine was nothing but a reserve corps, a much better disposition than that of the preceding year. In the month of June, Broglie united the two armies on the confines of Hesse and Westphalia; then drove Prince Ferdinand from Hesse, and encroached upon Hanover and Thuringia (July–September). Ferdinand attempted a bold diversion. He precipitated his nephew, the young hereditary prince of Brunswick,[1] at the head of fifteen thousand men, upon the Lower Rhine, with orders to attack Wesel, and then to effect an entrance into the Austrian Netherlands in order to assist an expedition which was fitting out in the ports of England, and which was to make a descent on Antwerp. This blow, if successful, would transfer the war to the frontiers of France. Brunswick crossed the Rhine, went to secure the crossing of the Meuse near Röermond, then returned to besiege Wesel. He had been only a few days before this place when twenty thousand French came to its aid, under the command of the Marquis de Castries, one of Broglie's lieutenants. Brunswick attacked the French at Closter-Camp during the night of October 15–16. He was warmly repulsed.[2] On returning to his camp at Burich, he found his bridges carried away by an inundation of the Rhine. Hemmed in between the Rhine, the victorious army, and the besieged town, had he had to deal with an enterprising enemy, he would have been destroyed. Castries suffered him tranquilly to rebuild his bridges, and return to Westphalia. The English did not appear in the mouths of the Scheldt, and the troops went into winter-quarters.

They did not remain long in repose there. Prince Ferdinand sought to profit by the too great extent of the French quarters. He suddenly attacked them in the month of February, 1761, and obliged the Marshal de Broglie to burn his vast magazines, and fall back upon Frankfort; but this time there was no rout as with

[1] The famous Brunswick of the Revolution.

[2] It was in this action that the celebrated deed of the Chevalier d'Assas occurred, the incidents of which have been somewhat changed by tradition. The firing had begun in the darkness. D'Assas, a captain of chasseurs, was posted quite at the extremity of the French line. An officer cried out to him that he was mistaken, and that he was firing on his own comrades. He quitted the ranks, rushed amidst the English, exclaimed, "*Fire, chasseurs, they are enemies!*" and fell pierced with bayonet-thrusts. — See *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. p. 162. Rochambeau commanded the Auvergne regiment, in which D'Assas served. The companies of chasseurs (light infantry) were of quite recent institution. Rochambeau had conceived the idea and set the example of them in order "to afford emulation to that class of men of small stature, so numerous and so much neglected in France, but so active, and sometimes more nimble than those of greater size." — *Ibid.* p. 130.

Digitized by Google

the Count de Clermont: the French detachments, quartered in Göttingen, Mulhausen, and the Hessian places, defended themselves warmly; and Broglie, after rallying the main body of his troops, resumed the offensive, and drove Ferdinand for the second time from Hesse, with the loss of fifteen thousand men (March, 1761).

The national honor was somewhat consoled; but these sterile successes did not compensate for the cruel losses which France continued to experience. The ruin of Canada was consummated during this campaign; that of French India was close at hand. The governor, Lally, after causing the loss of our magnificent settlements in the Deccan, and vainly attacking Madras, had lost a decisive battle against Colonel Coote, at Wandiwash, in consequence of his obstinacy in not following the advice of Bussi, who was taken prisoner in this unhappy action (January 22, 1760). The English retook Arcot and Devicotta, and captured Karikal from us. At the beginning of May, 1760, the French found themselves restricted to Pondicherry and two or three fortresses. Lally then tardily attempted to return to the system of Dupleix and Bussi, and to call in the aid of native allies against the English. He treated with Hyder Ali, who was governing Mysore as the general of the rajah of that kingdom, and who was later to render himself illustrious by his obstinate struggle against the English. Hyder Ali sent a small army to revictual Pondicherry. An Anglo-Indian corps attacked the Mysoreans on their return, and was defeated by them (June 17). The English, however, soon received powerful assistance from Europe. The French, on the contrary, saw none appear during the whole year. The squadron of the Count d'Aché, which had reappeared for a moment on the coast of Coromandel in the month of September, 1759, and had fought a third naval battle there without decisive success, had almost immediately departed again for the Isle of France, and never more returned. The report having been spread that the English were planning an attack on the Isles of France and Bourbon, the ministry had despatched to Aché a prohibition to quit these islands.

Every thing simultaneously failed the defenders of Pondicherry. The Mysoreans, discouraged by a few repulses, alarmed at the diversions which the English were instigating against their country, and without confidence or sympathy for Lally, departed, no more to return. Pondicherry, at the end of August, began to be besieged by land and sea. Despite the energetic resistance of the

Digitized by Google

garrison, the great quickset hedge that surrounded the suburbs of Pondicherry with a living rampart of verdure was carried by the enemy; then, after the hedge, the outposts of the place. The English, however, were not in a position to assault the town until the month of December. Famine was raging, and the besieged were reduced to the last extremity, when a furious hurricane, December 31, shattered the English squadron, sunk four ships and a frigate, overthrew the camp of the besiegers, and ruined their works. Pondicherry believed itself saved. Vain hope! Seven English ships came from Madras and Ceylon to replace the wrecked vessels; the camp was rebuilt; and in a week all was repaired. January 14, 1761, the eleven hundred famished soldiers that remained in Pondicherry had only twenty-four hours' provisions. They were forced to surrender at discretion. January 17, the English flag floated over the capital of French India.

The last places possessed by France — Mahé on the coast of Malabar, Gingee and Thiagur in the Carnatic — surrendered in the course of the year; and the French colors disappeared from all India.[1] No monument remained to us of our distant empire but that mysterious legacy from the primitive world, those sacred books of India and Persia, of which a young hero of science — Anquetil-Duperron — had gone in quest, through a thousand perils, amidst the jealous hands that concealed them from Europe. The conquests of philosophy and history were to be more lasting than those of arms and politics.[2]

We have seen by what a series of cowardice and folly the government of Louis XV. had paved the way for the fall of India. Public opinion, too long slumbering or deceived, awoke with tardy anger. The administration flung a victim to the popular resentment: it had had a trial for Canada;[3] it had one also for India. The blow could fall only on Lally. The indignation of the conquered colony broke forth furiously against the governor;

[1] See Barchou de Penhoën, *Hist. de la fondation de l'empire anglais dans l'Inde*, t. II. liv. vi.

[2] Anquetil-Duperron published in 1771 the translation of the *Zendavesta*, or Collection of the sacred books of the religion of Zoroaster. In the same year appeared the French translation of the *Shuking*, the most important, perhaps, of the Chinese books, by the Jesuit Gaubil. Part of the works of Confucius had been translated into Latin, and published at Paris as early as 1687.

[3] The governor, the intendant, and the principal agents of the administration, were prosecuted for abuses and waste. The governor was honorably acquitted: the rest were condemned for the most part to imprisonment, and to restitutions amounting altogether to eleven millions. — See Garneau, *Hist. du Canada*, t. III. liv. x.

Digitized by Google

he had against him both the knaves whom he had repressed by violence, and the honest men, irritated at his excesses, and devoted to his rival Bussi. A prisoner in England, he obtained leave, like La Bourdonnais, to return to France to justify himself. He recriminated against his accusers with all the vehemence of his nature. Choiseul hesitated to sacrifice him. The rumor was spread that Lally had purchased with some diamonds of great value the protection of the Duchess de Gramont, the sister of Choiseul, and very influential with her brother. The haughty duchess indignantly urged Choiseul to silence this calumny by causing Lally's arrest. The order was given in council; but Choiseul apprised Lally of it. The latter, instead of fleeing, surrendered himself prisoner at the Bastille. He remained there nineteen months without being interrogated, and without knowing before what tribunal he was to answer. During the interval, the Superior of the Jesuits of French India, Father Lavaur,[1] who had played a very active part in the colony, died at Paris. Two memorials were found among his effects, the first of which was a panegyric of Lally, the second a list of the charges against him. He had proposed to make use of one or the other according to circumstances. The enemies of Lally concealed the apology, and transmitted the other to the attorney-general. The magistrate took this document as the foundation of an indictment against the ex-governor for peculation and treason, which he presented to the parliament. Letters patent from the King referred to the great chamber and the Tournelle[2] assembled "the cognizance of offences committed in India." After interminable proceedings, the parliament rendered one of the most unreasonable decrees contained in its annals (May 6, 1766). It condemned the Count de Lally to be decapitated, not for high treason or peculation, for it was impossible to find any thing of this sort in his conduct, but for "having betrayed the interests of the King, the State, and the Company," and for "abuse of authority, vexations, and extortions." *Having betrayed the interests of the King*, etc., had no other meaning than having committed political and military mistakes: the only real *crimes* of Lally were his acts of violence towards the Indians; and these were not the reason of his condemnation. Choiseul solicited his pardon of the King. Louis

[1] A very able man. It must be admitted that he had well served the interests of France in the times of Duplex and Bussi.

[2] The court for adjudicating in all criminal cases brought before the parliaments. — Tr.

Digitized by Google

XV. parodied George II. and Mr. Pitt in the affair of Byng: he was inflexible ; and the Ex-Governor of India lost his head on the scaffold.

Twelve years after (in 1778), the son of Lally, energetically seconded by the dying Voltaire, obtained the annulment of his father's sentence by the council of the King, on account of the numerous irregularities which had preceded the judgment. The reconsideration of the suit was referred to the parliament of Burgundy, and the memory of Lally was rehabilitated.[1]

The real criminal upon whom posterity throws the weight of the responsibility of the loss of India is not the Count de Lally, but the very monarch who caused his head to fall.

Even before learning of the fall of Pondicherry, the Duke de Choiseul had entered upon a new attempt at negotiation with the English. The aged King of England, George II., had died October 25, 1760, and had been succeeded by his grandson, George III., a young man of twenty-two. A new spirit was introduced into the councils of the crown of England by this accession. George II. had been, like his father, a German, but a Whig king: George III., a stranger by birth and education to Hanover, which he never visited, was the first truly English king of the dynasty; but he was an English Tory, disposed to lean on the old monarchical party,— on those Jacobites who, despairing of ever witnessing the return of the Stuarts, transferred their royalism to the *usurping* dynasty. Lord Bute, the confidant and mentor of the young monarch, resembled the favorites of the kings of the Continent much more than the leaders of the English parliamentary parties. A rival influence thenceforth commenced secretly to undermine the rule of Pitt. The great Whig minister designed to carry on the war till France was rendered unable ever to revive her marine. The Tory counsellor of George III. encouraged the formation of a peace party as a means of overthrowing the ministerial power, which, supported by the parliament, annulled the authority of the crown.

The consequences of this new disposition could not, however, be immediate; and it was still with William Pitt, in the apparent plenitude of his power, that the cabinet of Versailles had to deal.

The first form of negotiation projected by Choiseul having failed, he now accepted the idea of a general congress, provided

[1] Barchou de Penhoën, t. II. liv. vi.; Voltaire, *Fragments sur l'Inde*, appended to the *Hist. du Parlement de Paris;* Notice of M. de Meilhan, appended to the *Mémoires de madame du Hausset*, p. 192.

Digitized by Google

that the interests of France and England were treated separately, reserving the right of signing the whole together. He desired that an armistice should coincide with the opening of the negotiations. Austria refused this: she hoped for a decisive result from the campaign of 1761 so far as she was concerned, and cared little for the losses and exhaustion of France. She consented to the negotiations, which pledged her to nothing of consequence; and, March 26, a proposition for a congress was addressed by France and her allies to England and Prussia, at the same time that separate proposals were presented to England by France. Choiseul offered Pitt as a basis the *uti possidetis* on the footing in which the respective possessions of the two nations should be found in the East Indies on the 1st of September, 1761, in America and Africa on the 1st of July, and in Europe on the 1st of May, reserving the right of discussing the delays proposed, or the exchanges that might be agreed upon. Pitt consented to receive a French minister, and to send an English minister to Versailles, and accepted the *uti possidetis* (April 8); but he made Choiseul wait more than two months for a positive answer concerning the epochs at which the status of the possessions should be fixed. He had his reasons. At that very moment, an English squadron landed twelve thousand soldiers at Belle-Isle, four leagues from the coast of Brittany. Repulsed in a first attempt at a descent, April 8, the English were more successful on the 22d; and the garrison, about three thousand five hundred strong, was obliged to shut itself up in the town of Le Palais and the citadel of Belle-Isle. The Duke d'Aiguillon, the Governor of Brittany, had not constructed the necessary works at Belle-Isle, or provided it with the needed supplies, although the States of the province had offered him every thing under their jurisdiction; neither had he known how to profit by the fortnight that elapsed between the first and the second descent; and the island received scarcely any assistance, while the English were reënforced by a new squadron. The French navy gave no signs of life; the vessels that had taken refuge in the Vilaine had been disarmed; the squadron of Rochefort and a few vessels that remained at Brest were blockaded by superior forces. The Governor of Belle-Isle, Sainte-Croix, and the greater part of the garrison, did their duty bravely: after inflicting considerable loss on the enemy, however, they finally saw the town carried by storm, and were obliged to surrender the citadel (June 7). The English remained masters of a post which blockaded Morbihan, the Vilaine, and the Loire. For the first

Digitized by Google

time in our modern wars, they regained a footing on our shores! The prolonged resistance of Belle-Isle had at least preserved Lorient, the port of the Indian Company, which the English were no longer in a condition to attack with any chance of success.[1]

Belle-Isle conquered, Pitt offered for the *uti possidetis* the dates of July 1, September 1, and November 1. Choiseul resigned himself to the English dates, and proposed the cession and guarantee of Canada to England in consideration of the guarantee of the right of fishery at Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the restitution of the Island of Cape Breton, which France engaged not to fortify. He offered to exchange Minorca for Guadeloupe and Marie Galante, and demanded the reëstablishment of the Godeheu treaty in India, and the restitution of Senegal or Goree, and of Belle-Isle, in consideration of the evacuation of Hesse, Hanover, and Göttingen, by the French. Pitt refused Cape Breton, which was comprised in the *uti possidetis* of the English, and demanded in terms of unheard-of insolence the demolition of Dunkirk, on the basis of the treaty of Utrecht, which was outside the *uti possidetis*.[2] He refused Senegal and the Godeheu treaty, and made no reply so far as Germany was concerned. He by no means intended to set the interests of England against the interests of the German allies. Neither did he grant the restitution of the three hundred merchant-vessels piratically captured before the declaration of war.

The cabinet of Versailles would not yet break off: it maintained its propositions, adding thereto a plan for the partition of the four neutral islands of the West Indies. It was resigned to yield concerning Dunkirk. The French ambassador at the same time presented to the cabinet of St. James a memorial, in which France announced the intention of causing the peace to be guaranteed by Spain, and supported several demands addressed by this crown to England, "in order that the reconciliation between France and England might not be afterwards disturbed by the interests of a third party" (July 15).

This step indicated that Choiseul had at length succeeded in

[1] *Mercure historiq.* t. CL. (April, May, June), CLI. (July); Sainte-Croix, *Hist. de la Puissance navale de l'Angleterre*, t. II. p. 317; *Mém. de Duclos*, p. 658.

[2] "Mr. Pitt replied, that, since England had acquired the empire of the seas, he dreaded Dunkirk little personally; but that the fear which had formerly been conceived of it was a prejudice which still existed in the minds of the masses, and which must be respected. The people, added Mr. Pitt, regard the demolition of Dunkirk as *an eternal monument of the yoke imposed on France*; and a minister would risk his head, should he neglect to give this satisfaction to the English." — See Flassan, t. VI. p. 405.

Digitized by Google

forming that alliance with Spain which he had so ardently desired. A highly important negotiation between the cabinets of Versailles and Madrid had indeed proceeded simultaneously with the parleys between France and England. The new King, Carlos III., had shown much hesitation. The system of neutrality had been of evident advantage to Spain, who was still in great need of some years of peace to reëstablish her finances and marine, and to begin to develop her internal resources: on the other hand, Carlos III. hated England, of whom he had had serious cause of complaint when King of Naples, and who now molested and tyrannized over the maritime commerce of the Spaniards, like that of all neutrals. Attached at heart to the eldest branch of his house, he saw with pain the reverses of France, and feared that the English, when they had once dictated peace to Louis XV., would make use of their power to treat Spain with still greater arrogance. He suddenly came to a decision at the beginning of 1761, and made unhoped-for overtures to the court of France for a treaty of alliance. Choiseul replied by the plan of a *family compact* between the different branches of the House of Bourbon, and of an agreement according to which France and Spain would unite their interests and grievances with respect to England, and the King of Spain would declare war against the English on May 1, 1762, if peace were not previously concluded between them and France. The court of France granted a concession which must have been precious to the Spanish pride; namely, the renunciation of precedence: that is, that, in courts foreign to the House of Bourbon, the ambassadors of France and Spain should take precedence of each other according to the priority of their credentials. France offered Minorca to Spain, if war were declared, and only asked Spain to pledge herself, during the war, to permit France alone to import cloths and other dry-goods into her possessions, in such a manner as to exclude English merchandise.

The French cabinet did not press the conclusion with Spain as warmly as it might have done, so much did it hope for a pacific issue of the parleys with England. Louis XV. desired peace, much less through consideration for the deplorable state of France than on account of the "intestine disturbances of which he was excessively weary, and which could only be repressed during peace."[1] The parliaments and the clergy were still at

[1] Despatch from M. de Choiseul to the ambassador of France in Spain, July 7, 1761. ap. Flassan, t. VI. p. 302.

Digitized by Google

variance, and the great affair of the Jesuits was agitating France as violently as the war itself. We shall recur to this hereafter.

A pacific conclusion became less and less probable. Mr. Pitt had sent back the memorial in which France supported the Spanish claims, declaring that the King of England would not permit France to meddle in the discussions between Great Britain and Spain. He made no concession as to the conditions of peace. The French cabinet maintained its right to interfere in the interests of Spain, and sent an ultimatum to London, August 5. It yielded concerning Senegal, and consented for the two Indian companies to make a new treaty. There remained serious difficulties only: 1st, Concerning the possession of some port in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, claimed as indispensable to secure to the French the right of fishery; 2d, Concerning the restitution of the vessels taken before the war; 3d, Concerning the position towards the German allies.

Pitt replied to the French ambassador by a letter which might be considered as a rupture (August 15). It was expected. On the same day that the letter was written, the *family compact* was signed at Paris.

The Most Christian King and the Catholic King declared in this, that, in future, any power that might become the enemy of the one should be the enemy of the other. They reciprocally guaranteed to each other all the States that they possessed, and granted the same guarantee to the King of the Two Sicilies and the Infant, Duke of Parma, on condition of reciprocity.[1] This guarantee was to be sustained by the whole force of the respective powers; but, as a first assistance, the one of the two crowns from which it was demanded, was to put, within three months, twelve ships and six frigates at the disposal of the court requiring it, besides twenty-four thousand men if required by France, and twelve thousand if required by Spain. Spain did not obligate herself, however, to take part in the wars in which France might engage by reason of the treaty of Westphalia and of other alliances with the German and Northern powers, unless some maritime power should participate in these wars, or France should be attacked on her own soil: in the latter event, Spain was to furnish in case of need twenty-four thousand soldiers. The assistance by land and sea was to be regarded as belonging by full right to the power that should require it, although it was to be supported at the expense of the party by

[1] The government of Naples did not accede at that time, and it was not urged to do so in order to avoid committing it uselessly with England.

Digitized by Google

which it was furnished. The operations of the war were to be concerted in common. Peace was only to be made in common; so that, in war as in peace, each of the two crowns was to regard the interests of his ally as his own. In consequence, when negotiation was in question, the advantages of the one power were to be set against the losses of the other; the two monarchies of France and Spain acting as if they formed only one and the same power. No power outside of the House of Bourbon could be admitted to a participation in this treaty. The right of *aubaine* was abolished between France, Spain, and the Two Sicilies, as regarded their respective subjects.[1] Full reciprocity was established between the three flags in the respective ports, with the proviso that the same rights should not be granted to other nations. The contracting parties were to confide to each other all the alliances which they thenceforth might form, and all the negotiations into which they might enter.

This was the closest union that it was possible to contract. It was almost without example, except in the family compacts of the ancient House of Austria. This great treaty, so different in its character and its national aim from the extravagant compacts which had preceded it, finally realized the idea of Louis XIV., half a century after the death of the Great King. But, in diplomacy as elsewhere, it is not enough for a plan to be good in itself: it is necessary that it should arrive opportunely.

To the family compact was annexed a separate agreement, in conformity with the project of Choiseul. Spain was to declare war against England, May 1, 1762, if peace were not previously concluded with France. France promised Minorca to Spain, the moment that war should be declared. It was agreed to invite the King of Portugal to accede to this agreement, "it not being just for him to continue to enrich the enemies of the two sovereigns while they were sacrificing themselves for the common advantage of all the maritime nations." All the maritime powers might accede to the agreement. No mention was made of the commercial advantages demanded in the plan of Choiseul for France.[2]

The compact and the agreement were kept secret.

The official answer of the English cabinet to the ultimatum of the French cabinet arrived September 1. Pitt granted to France

[1] This inhospitable law, so contrary to natural right, was abolished by successive treaties between France and the different European States.

[2] See Flassan, t. VI. p. 314 *et seq.*; Wenck, t. III. p. 278.

Digitized by Google

the little Island of St. Peter, as a harbor on the coast of Newfoundland, on condition that France should neither erect any fortifications nor receive foreign vessels there, and that she should receive an English commissioner, and be subject to the inspection of the commander of the English squadron of Newfoundland. He exacted that France should restore in Germany, not only the territories which she occupied on her own behalf, but the Prussian places which she occupied on behalf of Austria. He still refused the vessels taken before the war.

The cabinet of Versailles wished to throw all the blame upon its adversary. It despatched, September 9, an *ultimatissimum*, in which it said nothing of the vessels taken before the war, or of the grievances of Spain; accepted the Island of St. Peter, without the inspection of the English commodore, and provided that the neighboring islet of Miquelon were added to it; and submitted, in fine, to almost all of the exorbitant demands of the British, except the restitution of the places conquered in the name of the Empress-Queen. Choiseul would not have made such propositions if he had thought that they would be accepted; but he knew the disposition of Pitt, who had made what he called concessions to France only under the importunities of Lord Bute. Mr. Pitt's sole reply was the recall of the English ambassador (September 20).[1]

This rupture was followed by a great event. Mr. Pitt did not suspect the existence of the compact that united France and Spain; and he projected acting towards Spain as his predecessors had done towards France in 1755. At the same time that he recalled the English ambassador from Versailles, he unfolded to the cabinet of St. James a vast plan of aggression on Spain. War was to be declared by intercepting the galleons from America: then two expeditions were to go, the one to make a conquest of Martinique, Havana, and Panama; the other to seize the Philippines. Lord Bute, introduced by the King into the council a few months before, explicitly opposed both the new act of piracy proposed by Pitt, and all declaration of war against Spain. The other ministers, secretly hostile to the dictator who bowed them beneath his imperious yoke, almost all ranged themselves on the side of Lord Bute. Pitt declared, that, called to power by the voice of the people, he regarded himself as accountable to the people for his conduct, and that he could not take the

[1] Concerning all the negotiations with England and Spain, see Flassan, t. VI. pp. 377–446; and Garden, t. IV. pp. 74–193.

Digitized by Google

responsibility of an administration which he did not direct. The King accepted his resignation (October 5).[1]

It seemed as if the retirement of the implacable enemy of France must bring about the resumption of negotiations. The new ministry, in fact, indirectly apprised the cabinet of Versailles that the King of England was disposed to accept the *ultimatissimum* of France. Choiseul turned a deaf ear. He did not desire peace at this price, and he rightly judged that the new English cabinet would not dare to recede from the *ultimatissimum*, for fear of arousing the passions of England. He relied, on his side, on the passions of France as much as on the alliance of Spain. The loss of Belle-Isle, and the establishment of the English on our coasts, had moved the whole nation. Choiseul adroitly gave the impulse to the public spirit. He secretly induced the Cardinal de La Roche-Aimon, the Archbishop of Narbonne, to propose to the States of Languedoc to offer the King a man-of-war, as they had offered a regiment of dragoons during the War of the Austrian Succession. The proposition was adopted with enthusiasm (November 26). A unanimous outcry resounded from one end of France to the other, *The navy must be revived!* The municipal corporation of Paris, the six corporations of the merchants of Paris, the paymasters of *rentes*, the Knights of Malta, the Order of the Holy Ghost, the secretaries of the King, the bankers of the King, together with the treasurers of war, and the contractors, the receivers-general, the States of Burgundy, the parliament and city of Bordeaux, and the administrators of the mails, offered eleven more ships of from fifty-four to ninety guns. The farmers-general offered two ships of fifty-four guns; the Chamber of Commerce of Marseilles, a ship of seventy-four guns; the States of Flanders, a ship of fifty-four guns; the States of Artois, a frigate of forty-four guns; and the city of Strasburg, sails and rigging for six ships. The private gifts amounted, besides, to thirteen millions. A prodigious activity reanimated our ports, gloomy and silent since the disasters of 1759. Nothing was seen but ships in the process of building or repairing everywhere.[2]

[1] Adolphus, continuation of Hume and of Smollett, *Reign of George III.*, book ii.; Coxe, *Hist. d'Espagne sous les Bourbons*, t. IV. p. 458; Viel-Castel, Lord Chatham, ap. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. XXVI. p. 707: 1844.

[2] *Mém. de Besenval*, t. I. p. 342; *Mercure historiq.* t. CLI. December, 1761, t. CLII. January–March, 1762. The *Mercure historique* (t. CLII. p. 377) relates that a great plan of a national lottery for the benefit of the marine was made, and that the women, who were its ardent promoters, declared that they would break off all social intercourse with the men who did not subscribe to it.

Digitized by Google

Choiseul had just united in his hands the ministry of the marine to that of war,[1] by ceding to his cousin, Choiseul-Praslin, the ministry of foreign affairs, of which he retained the effective direction. He designed to reorganize the navy morally as well as materially, and to regenerate its spirit by the reformation of the corps of officers, into which he wished to introduce a new element, taken from among the captains of the merchant-vessels. He projected supplying the insufficiency of the crews by men chosen from the land forces, and by sailors attracted from foreign countries.[2]

The views of Choiseul were good. The buoyancy of France, after so many years of a government so well suited to demoralize and extinguish all public spirit, attested the powerful national vitality: but time was needed for these views and this buoyancy to produce their effects; and it is not easy during a war, and that war an unsuccessful one, to create the instruments of war.

It was less difficult for England to maintain herself than for France to retrieve her position. England continued her prodigious efforts, which increased from year to year. The funds voted by the parliament for 1761 had exceeded £15,500,000; the funds obtained for 1762 by the successors of Pitt, through the request of Pitt himself, amounted to £18,000,000, including a loan of £12,000,000, redeemable in ninety-nine years.

The new English ministry was forced to recognize that Pitt had been right, if not as to the means contrary to the laws of nations that he proposed, at least as to the intentions which he attributed to Spain. The English ambassador to Madrid having been ordered to demand the communication of the treaty of Spain with France, the Spanish cabinet at first replied evasively, then acknowledged the existence of the treaty; and, as the ambassador insisted on being unequivocally informed whether Spain intended to abandon neutrality, Carlos III. sent him his passports (December, 1761). The declarations of war were exchanged the following month.

Before viewing the consequences of the Franco-Spanish alliance,

[1] Minister of war on the death of the Marshal de Belle-Isle, January 26, 1761; minister of the marine, October 13, in the place of Berryer, who was made keeper of the seals.

[2] *Mercure hist.* t. CLI. p. 619, CLII. p. 296. The *officiers bleus* (officers not of noble birth) had just given a new proof of their capacity. The officers of the marine corps had declared it impossible to extricate from the Vilaine the vessels that had taken refuge there at the time of the shameful *battle of M. de Conflans.* The *officiers bleus* undertook it, and succeeded. — See *Vie privée de Louis XV.* t. III. p. 215.

Digitized by Google

and the military events of 1762, we must cast a glance backwards on the campaign of Germany in 1761.

The shameful and deplorable power before which Choiseul was obliged to bow his head had decided the fate of this campaign in advance with respect to the French arms. Prodigious forces had been assembled, "sufficient, had they been well conducted, to conquer Germany;"[1] but these forces were commanded by Soubise. The Marshal de Broglie having again placed affairs on a better footing, Madame de Pompadour had wished to secure to her favorite the glory of finishing the work. Sixty thousand men had therefore been left to Broglie in Hesse; but a hundred thousand had been given to Soubise on the Lower Rhine, with the chief command in the event of a junction! It was easy to predict what would be the result of the incapacity of one of the two generals, and the jealousy of the other. When Soubise entered Westphalia in the month of June, Prince Ferdinand, who had less than seventy thousand men, audaciously threw himself between the two French armies, then flanked Soubise, and cut off his communications with the Rhine. Soubise, greatly alarmed, hastened to join Broglie, although it had been predicted to him that this junction would bring him misfortune. The two marshals marched together against Ferdinand, who was strongly posted on the Lippe, at Villinghausen; then separated to surround the enemy, and agreed to attack him, each on his side, on the morning of July 16. Broglie, however, wished to have alone the honor of the affair. He did not content himself with taking up his position, but captured the outposts on the evening of the 15th. Ferdinand attempted to retake them, and by degrees moved his whole army thither. Soubise listened to the cannonading during the whole evening and the greater part of the night, without stirring: at last, on the receipt of a letter from Broglie, about three o'clock in the morning, he decided to put himself in motion; but, before he was really in line of battle, Ferdinand, by a last and vigorous charge, had compelled Broglie to retreat.

The public outcry was such against Soubise, although the wrong was not wholly on his side, that the court partially abandoned him, and obliged him to give thirty thousand men to Broglie. Affairs proceeded no better. The two marshals began again to operate, each on his own account, — Soubise against Münster and the places on the Lippe, Broglie on the confines of Westphalia and Hanover. Prince Ferdinand again placed himself between

[1] *Mém. de Napoléon*, t. VII. p. 294.

Digitized by Google

the two, and, well seconded by his nephew, the hereditary Prince of Brunswick, caused the failure of every thing undertaken by adversaries more than double in number. When the time came for winter-quarters, the armies found themselves exactly at the same point as the year before. It was a great victory to the enemy to have lost nothing.

It is important to remark that these deplorable results must be attributed solely to the generals. The French soldiers, without having become tacticians like the Prussians, were no longer the undisciplined marauders of 1757, and comported themselves very bravely in skirmishes and partial engagements, provided that they had a passable officer at their head.[1]

Operations seemed much more decisive in Prussia. The successes of Frederick in 1760 had only procured him a respite. As in 1760, the Austrians and the Russians attempted to effect their junction in Silesia, and this time succeeded. Frederick found himself hemmed in near Striegau by forces nearly triple his own. However good his post might have been, he would have probably been overpowered; but the Russian general, Boutourlin, refused to risk an attack, and, lacking provisions, soon quitted Silesia, without this menacing junction having produced the least effect. Nevertheless, Boutourlin having left twenty thousand Russians with the Austrian general, Laudon, the latter still remained incomparably superior to Frederick; and, September 30, he surprised the important place of Schweidnitz. Meanwhile, an army corps and a Russian squadron were besieging Colberg, in Eastern Pomerania. Boutourlin, on reëntering Poland with the principal army, despatched reënforcements to the besiegers; and Colberg capitulated, November 19. The Austrians were thus firmly established in the heart of Silesia; and the Russians, on the coast of Pomerania. This was worse than the loss of two battles. In another direction, Marshal Daun had driven Prince Henry from the mountains of Saxony. Frederick had reason to expect to be reduced to the last extremity in the coming year. To crown his misfortunes, his firmest support had just failed. Mr. Pitt had quitted the ministry; and Lord Bute, forced to continue the war against France, and to undertake it against Spain, wished to lighten the burdens of England by sacrificing Prussia, and renewing the ancient Austro-Britannic alliance. He made overtures with this view to the court of Vienna, so contrary to the

[1] See *Mém. de Napoléon*, t. VII. p. 306, and *Mém. de Rochambeau*, t. I. *passim*.

Digitized by Google

public engagements and the honor of England, that Kaunitz could not believe them sincere, and disdained them as a snare.[1]

Maria Theresa and Madame de Pompadour thought that they held their vengeance within their grasp. The loss of India and Canada, and the ruin of maritime France, had not too dearly purchased the ruin of the prince who had offended the favorite of Louis XV.

This ruin Madame de Pompadour had not the joy of seeing accomplished. A change of reign in Russia much more than compensated Frederick for the change of ministry that had occurred in Great Britain. The Czarina Elizabeth died January 5, 1762; and her death called to the throne her nephew, Peter of Holstein, the fanatical admirer of the King of Prussia, the prince whose influence had rendered the Russian generals so hesitating in their operations against Frederick. The Prussian hero did not confide in him overmuch: there was no sympathy that to him would have resisted the ordeal of a fine province, and he knew that Austria had guaranteed Prussia to the court of St. Petersburg. But the new Czar, Peter III., was a simple soul, who was ruled by passion or caprice, and not by interest. He contemptuously rejected the proposal made to him by Lord Bute, to compel Prussia to whatever cession he might wish; and concluded a truce with Frederick, March 16; then signed a peace, May 5, engaging to evacuate within two months all that the Russian armies had captured from Prussia. The peace was succeeded by an offensive alliance; and, as early as the end of June, the twenty thousand Russians that had been left with the Austrian army of Silesia in 1761 joined the Prussians against the Austrians. Sweden, that had been carrying on a petty warfare in Pomerania without success and without ardor, hastened to make peace after the Russians.

This strange revolution presaged the greatest disasters to Austria. In her conviction of certain success, she had, during the past winter, reduced her army in advance twenty thousand men, in order to relieve her finances; and now an epidemic was wasting her diminished and discouraged troops, in the face of an enemy become superior and full of confidence.

A second turn of fortune, much more extraordinary, and of a kind seen nowhere but in Russia, saved Austria in turn. If, in despotic States, the caprice of a single person can change, from one day to the next, the whole policy of an empire, it is not without a responsibility, in point of fact, often more formidable than the

[1] Garden, t. IV. p. 194; Frederick II., *Guerre de Sept Ans*, t. II. p. 291.

Digitized by Google

legal responsibility of free States. Peter III., as imprudent as passionate, had not comprehended the circumspection rendered necessary to him by his foreign origin towards a haughty, ignorant, and distrustful nation. He had alienated the clergy by uniting their estates to the crown property, according to the plan of Peter I., and by undertaking to make them adopt the costume of the Lutheran pastors, and remove from the churches the images of the saints. The clergy, although much humbled by the great reformer of the empire, were not enemies to be despised, if a pretext were thus given them for arousing the fears of the people lest Russia should be rendered Lutheran. Peter had offended the regiments of the guards even less, perhaps, by the unusually rigorous discipline to which he subjected them, than by his manifest contempt for every thing that did not pertain to the Prussian soldiery or the Prussian tactics. The project that he announced of making war on Demark to avenge the injuries of his family, the House of Holstein, did not cause less dissatisfaction among the Russians, who saw therein only a foreign quarrel, and who would have far rather taken Prussia than Holstein. Their national self-love was deeply offended that their Czar, their Emperor, should glory in the title of lieutenant-general of the Prussian armies, solicited as a favor from Frederick II. They were astonished and indignant that Peter never appeared in their churches, and abstained from being crowned at Moscow, according to the consecrated rites.[1]

The elements of rebellion were fomenting on all sides. Nothing but a leader was needed for the conspiracy of a whole people. This leader was found on the throne itself, by the side of Peter III., in his own wife, Catharine of Anhalt-Zerbst, the grand-daughter of the renowed organizer of the Prussian infantry. This woman of impetuous blood and cool brain, at once fiercely sensual and endowed with a terrible empire over herself, had the inclinations of the most dissolute Roman empresses, like her predecessor, Elizabeth of Russia, but allied with the profound, persevering, and implacable genius of Elizabeth of England. She had excited her husband's anger by amours known to all European diplomacy, and she suspected Peter III. of designing to repudiate her and to disown her infant son (afterwards Paul I.). She became the soul and aim of the plot. She roused the regiments of the guards to insurrection. The impulse, once given, swept away every thing. Peter III., surrounded in the Castle of Oranienbaum, abdicated to save his

[1] Frederick II., *Guerre de Sept Ans*, t. III. p. 292; *Mercure historiq.* CLIII. p. 117; Coxe, *Hist. de la maison d'Autriche*, ch. cxvii.

Digitized by Google

life; but, a few days after, it was announced that he had died of nephritic colic. He had been poisoned, it is affirmed, then strangled by four men, the first of whom, Alexis Orloff, was the brother of the lover of Catharine, and the second of whom, Potemkin, was destined to replace this lover. The senate of the Empire proclaimed Catharine; and the revolution, which had overthrown the grandson of Peter the Great[1] because of his foreign tastes, raised to the throne a woman absolutely foreign to Russia: a fanatical people welcomed with acclamations an infidel sovereign, who declared herself the elect of Providence.[2]

We shall see hereafter what this formidable reign became, with its two faces, the one of national fanaticism, turned within, the other of infidel and innovating philosophy, turned towards Europe, — towards that France, above all, whose writers made the opinion of Europe. Catharine was Frederick II. on one side, and the great Ivan on the other.

The news from St. Petersburg fell on the King of Prussia like a thunderbolt. He saw himself on the point of falling again into the abyss from which he had scarcely escaped. The first acts of Catharine with respect to him seemed wholly hostile. Catharine had feared that Frederick would turn against her, in the name of Peter III., the Russian corps that had joined the Prussian army; but Frederick was not the man to compromise himself for a friend, and judged moreover that any effort to save Peter would come too late. Catharine, on her side, wished to consolidate her power before undertaking any thing without. When she saw that Frederick attempted nothing against her, she evacuated Prussia, and confined herself to neutrality. The Prussians and the Austrians remained face to face; but the Russians, before quitting the Prussians, had rendered them an important service. General Czernichew, by the entreaty of Frederick, had deferred for three days the departure, orders for which had been sent him by Catharine; and, while the Russians still seemed to form the reserve of the Prus-

[1] Peter III. was the son of a daughter of Peter the Great. Concerning his death, see Flassan, t. VI. p. 339.

[2] See, in the *Mercure hist. et politique* of 1762, t. CLIII. (July), Catharine's manifesto, an unheard-of mixture of religious hypocrisy and political audacity which we know not how to define. It is stated therein, in justification of the deposition of the Czar, as something perfectly natural, that there was not a subject who was not ready to attempt the life of this enemy of the nation and of religion; and Catharine claims the honor of the salvation of Russia for herself and "a few faithful subjects who had resolved to free the country, or die." This inconceivable document seems written jointly by the classic republicans of antiquity and the members of the *council of sixteen* of the League. It is attributed to the Princess Daschkoff, the friend of Catharine.

Digitized by Google

sian army, Frederick had hastened to strike a decisive blow: he had carried the positions which connected the camp of Marshal Daun with the place of Schweidnitz, and paved the way for the investment of this stronghold (July 21, 1762). All the attempts of the Austrians to succor Schweidnitz proved abortive, although the place was well and obstinately defended:[1] the garrison surrendered themselves prisoners, October 9. Silesia was thus secured to Frederick.

Prince Henry of Prussia had made, meanwhile, an advantageous campaign in Saxony, and Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick had obtained brilliant successes against the French. The court of Versailles, or rather Madame de Pompadour, who had for a moment given way before public opinion in the discussion between Broglie and Soubise, had soon avenged herself: she had disgraced Broglie at the end of 1761, and, not daring to give the army to Soubise alone, had adjoined to him his senior, the Marshal d'Estrées. The two marshals had eighty thousand men in Hesse; the Prince de Condé,[2] a reserve of thirty thousand on the Lower Rhine. Ferdinand took the offensive for the purpose of attempting once more to recover Hesse: he attacked the French at Willemstad, June 24, by flanking their wings at a distance by means of detached corps, a manœuvre that would have been madly rash before a well-commanded army. It was the repetition of Crefeld: the general officers in command of the extremities attacked defended themselves very well; but the two marshals, instead of vigorously supporting their lieutenants, lost their presence of mind, and ordered a retreat. Although rejoined by the reserve of Condé, and greatly superior to Ferdinand, after a few weeks' manœuvring on the Fulde, they fell back upon the Lahn, leaving a body of troops in Cassel. Ferdinand, with less than seventy thousand men against ninety thousand, without counting the garrison of Cassel, besieged this town, covered the siege, and took it, with its garrison, almost under the eyes of D'Estrées and Soubise (November 1).

The maritime events were still graver and more deplorable. Time was needed for the uprising of France to revive its marine, and for the considerably numerous but dilapidated marine of Spain to be in a condition to act. The English, on their side, were in

[1] Two French engineers directed the attack and the defence. — See Frederick II., *Hist. de la Guerre de Sept Ans*, t. II. p. 368.

[2] Son of *Monsieur le Duc*. This was the Condé of the emigration, who died at a very advanced age, under the Restoration.

Digitized by Google

action. The cabinet of Lord Bute had been forced to resume the plans of Mr. Pitt. As early as the autumn of 1761, a strong English squadron had sailed for the West Indies for the purpose of renewing the attack on Martinique. The conquest of Guadeloupe had not been sufficient to secure these waters to the English, and the privateers of Martinique had continued to lay waste their commerce. Martinique was to them, in the American seas, what St. Malo and Dunkirk were in the seas of Europe.[1] Nineteen ships of the line and twelve frigates appeared, January 7, 1762, before the Bay of St. Anne, and unsuccessfully attempted a landing. A vessel was stranded on the coast. On the 16th, a descent was effected between Pointe-des-Nègres and Case-des-Pilotes. From twelve to fifteen thousand soldiers marched to attack Mounts Garnier and Tartenson, fortified heights that defended the approaches to Fort Royal. The two heights were carried by assault after a vigorous resistance. The English army moved upon Fort Royal. The governor capitulated, February 4, without waiting for an attack, and retired to St. Pierre, the capital of the island. The English followed him thither. The governor and inhabitants treated, as early as February 12, in behalf of the whole island. The resistance of Martinique had been far inferior to that of Guadeloupe: the English forces, indeed, were much more considerable, and the island had no hope of speedy assistance. St. Lucia, Grenada, Tobago, and St. Vincent were occupied without fighting by the English, already masters of Dominica for a year; and the Lesser Antilles, whether French or neutral, were all in their power.

The extent of this loss may be estimated by a single item:

[1] An important remark must be made on the subject of privateering warfare; namely, that it is not enough, as many imagine, to be *the ruler of the seas*, to be secure from privateers. It is possible, and even then incompletely, to prevent the exit of the enemy's squadrons; but a country that possesses a great extent of coast can never be sufficiently blockaded to prevent the exit of privateers. Never, perhaps, has maritime superiority been more decided than that of England over France from 1759 to 1762. Well, from June, 1756, to June, 1760, the French privateers captured from the English more than twenty-five hundred merchantmen: in 1761, though France had not, so to speak, a ship of the line at sea, and though the English had taken two hundred and forty of our privateers, their comrades still captured eight hundred and twelve English vessels. The prodigious growth of the English merchant shipping explains the quantity of these prizes. In 1760, it is claimed that the English had as many as eight thousand sail at sea: the French captured nearly one-tenth of these, despite the escorts and cruisers. The French lost only nine hundred and fifty vessels, privateers included, from 1756 to 1760. — See Sainte-Croix, t. II. p. 314; *Mercure hist.* t. CLII. p. 846; Contin. of Hume, book xxxiii.

Digitized by Google

Martinique received every year from France more than one hundred and sixty vessels, of from one hundred to six hundred tons, which made more than twenty-five per cent profit on the return voyages.[1]

Before this new reverse was known in France, the cabinets of Versailles and Madrid had engaged in an enterprise in which Choiseul hoped to find an indemnification for the losses of France, and a means of constraining England to restore her conquests.[2] Portugal was still subject to the commercial vassalage of England, in which almost all the gold of Brazil glided away; and the energetic minister who then governed that kingdom, the Marquis de Pombal, had made vain efforts to throw off this yoke. France and Spain invited Portugal to join them against the tyrant of the seas (March, 1762); letting it be understood that they would no longer suffer a neutrality wholly to the advantage of England, and to which the Portuguese were not even in a condition to insure respect. Some French vessels had been burned by the English under the guns of the Portuguese fortresses, for which it had been impossible to obtain any reparation. It was believed that Portugal, weakened by the recent catastrophe which had thrown her into commotion (the earthquake at Lisbon), and by intestine dissensions, would yield to intimidation, or would be easily conquered. Pombal resisted. However disaffected he was to the English, he judged the moment ill chosen to break with England, victorious and mistress of the seas; and as the Spaniards, reënforced by a few French battalions, were crossing the frontiers, Portugal was the first to issue her declaration of war (May 18). Thirty thousand men invaded the provinces of Tras-os-Montes and Beira: but the Franco-Spanish army, badly commanded, operated tamely; the Portuguese nationality awakened in the presence of invasion; the mountaineers opposed a vigorous partisan warfare to the foreigners; and eight thousand English, landed at Lisbon, reestablished the balance of power. When the King of Spain changed his general, and sent the Count d'Aranda, who transferred the war to the Tagus, it was too late. The Anglo-Portuguese arrested the march of the Franco-Spaniards upon Lisbon, and the campaign proved abortive.

The only advantage of the war against Portugal was the con-

[1] *Mercure historiq.* t. CLII., March, April, 1762; Sainte-Croix, t. II. p. 328.

[2] The King of Spain had entertained the idea of a continental blockade, in which Russia would have been invited to coöperate; but Choiseul had judged this project impracticable. — See interesting details in Flassan, t. VI. p. 456.

Digitized by Google

quest, by the Hispano-Americans, of the Portuguese colony of Sacramento, on the left bank of the La Plata; a colony at that time the rival of Buenos Ayres, like Monte Video to-day. They took there many English vessels richly laden, a prize compensated for by the loss of a galleon from Peru, the freight of which, it is claimed, was worth twenty-five millions. The French, on their side, won a success in the month of June. A small squadron of two ships and two frigates effected a descent on the coast of Newfoundland, and took, by capitulation, the little town of St. John, the capital of the island; but an Anglo-American expedition from Halifax recovered it as early as September.

Meanwhile, the English pursued their plans in the waters of the West Indies. A squadron sent from Portsmouth, and increased to nineteen ships by its junction with a part of the fleet that had conquered Martinique, suddenly crossed the dangerous passages of the Old Channel of Bahama, and threw fourteen thousand soldiers, June 7, upon the coast of Cuba, near Havana. The Governor of Cuba had fourteen ships of the line in the harbor of Havana, and two thousand troops, and a few thousand badly organized militia in the city and forts: he might have reënforced himself with nine other ships, both French and Spanish, that were either at Cape Français, in San Domingo, at Vera Cruz, or at Santiago, on the extremity of the Island of Cuba, opposite to Havana; but he had not desired to do so, believing himself unassailable. His pride cost Spain dear. The Spanish squadron rendered no service. The troops of the line defended Moro Castle, which commanded the harbor, with heroic constancy. The English, weakened by the sword and by the diseases of a dangerous climate, would have been forced to reëmbark, had it not been for a reënforcement of four thousand Anglo-Americans. Moro Castle was finally taken by storm, July 30: Havana capitulated a fortnight after (August 13). The Spanish government lost there fifty millions' worth of property, besides nine ships of the line, which had escaped the English bombs, and which the governor had not even the good sense to burn. The rich capital of Cuba and the western part of this great island remained in the power of the English.

During the siege of Havana, another English expedition set sail from Madras for the Philippines to deal Spain a new blow in the remote regions of the East. From the end of September to the beginning of October, an Anglo-Indian corps attacked, took, and pillaged Manilla, and obliged it to redeem itself from utter

Digitized by Google

destruction by a considerable ransom. Two galleons, freighted with enormous wealth, were likewise captured.

Never had the colonial empire of Spain received such blows. Spain, whose opportune intervention might have modified the fate of the war, had entered the field too late to prevent or repair the misfortunes of France, but in time to share them. There was reason to fear still other reverses: Panama and San Domingo were menaced, and the Anglo-Americans were preparing for the invasion of Florida and Louisiana.

Negotiations, however, had been resumed before the issue of the expeditions against Havana and Manilla was known. The hope founded by the cabinet of Versailles on the alliance of Spain had greatly diminished as soon as the real state of this kingdom had been viewed more closely: Choiseul, nevertheless, animated by the reverses themselves, would have gladly continued the struggle. A saying, very forcible for this enervated court, is quoted of him: "Were I the master, we would stand towards England like Spain towards the Moors: if this resolve were taken, England would be destroyed thirty years hence."[1] Louis XV. was not the one to comprehend such language. It must be granted that matters were at the last extremity: the financial resources were absolutely exhausted. Choiseul understood the necessity of renewing negotiations as soon as Lord Bute had made some insinuations on the subject through the medium of a neutral power, Sardinia. The English cabinet persisted in its conciliatory intentions, believing it impossible to develop its monarchical policy at home so long as the war kept up the national enthusiasm. The success at Martinique had not raised its pretensions. The French government being resigned to cruel sacrifices, the parleys, which commenced anew in the middle of September, 1762, would have proceeded rapidly, had it not been for the haughty obstinacy of the Spanish ambassador, Grimaldi. This plenipotentiary protracted the affair, expecting, he said, that the attack on Cuba could not but fail, and that the position of Spain would thereby become much better. The Cuban expedition proved a complete success: England increased its exorbitant demands with respect to Spain; and France, as we shall see, paid the penalty.

The preliminaries of peace between France, England, and Spain, were signed at Fontainebleau, November 3. France renounced all claims to the dependencies of Nova Scotia: she ceded

[1] Letter to the ambassador of France in Spain, April 5, 1762, ap. Flassan, t. VI. p. 465.

Digitized by Google

Canada, the Island of Cape Breton, and all the Islands of the St. Lawrence; she also ceded the portion of Louisiana on the left of the Mississippi, with the exception of the city of New Orleans, all the Valley of the Ohio and the left bank of the Mississippi being considered as dependencies of Canada. In the West Indies, she ceded Grenada and the Grenadines, and surrendered three of the neutral islands to the English, who abandoned to her the fourth, St. Lucia, restoring to her Guadeloupe, Martinique, Marie Galante, and Desirade. France restored Minorca to the English,[1] ceded her important post of Senegal, and recovered the little Island of Goree. She recovered the possessions which she had had in India in 1749, including the site of Pondicherry, destroyed by its conquerors; but she renounced the right of keeping troops in Bengal, which left Chandernagore wholly at the mercy of the English. It was tacitly understood that the English Company would keep all its conquests. The restitution of the former settlements in India was not purely gratuitous; for a brave sailor, D'Estaing, setting sail from the Isle of France, had possessed himself, in 1760, of the flourishing English factories on the Island of Sumatra. England, in consequence of the right of fishing off Newfoundland granted to France, ceded the little Islands of St. Peter and Miquelon to serve as a shelter for the fishermen, on condition that they should not be fortified: the surveillance over these islands lately demanded by Pitt was no longer called in question; but Dunkirk, as a painful compensation, was to be restored to the same condition as before the war, and English engineers were empowered to go thither to assure themselves of this! France and England were to evacuate all that they held in the Empire as soon as possible, and to pledge themselves no longer to furnish any assistance to their respective allies who might remain engaged in the war of Germany. France was immediately to evacuate Ostend and Nieuwpoort. She tacitly renounced reclaiming the vessels taken before the declaration of war. England was to restore Belle-Isle at the time of the definitive treaty. The English cabinet, feeling the extreme difficulty of maintaining possession of it, had already ordered the fortifications to be blown up.

As to Spain, she renounced all pretensions to the fishery on the banks of Newfoundland. She engaged to permit the English to cut logwood in the Bay of Honduras, provided that they de-

[1] At the moment of the expedition of 1756, Pâris Duvernei had proposed to destroy the fortifications and to fill up Port Mahon, in the expectation that he would be obliged to restore the island to the English. — See *Correspondance de Richelieu*, p. 45.

Digitized by Google

molished the fortifications which they had erected there. England restored Havana, and all that she had taken elsewhere. Spain ceded to her Florida, and all that she possessed on the east of the Mississippi.

This cession completed the vast Anglo-American empire, which extended uninterruptedly from Labrador and Hudson's Bay to the mouth of the Mississippi. This empire was not destined to be of long duration.

Spain and Portugal mutually restored what they had taken from each other, a clause to the advantage of the allies of England.[1]

Lastly, by a secret agreement signed on the same day as the preliminaries, the King of France promised Louisiana to the King of Spain, to indemnify him for the loss of Florida, and the impossibility of restoring Minorca to Spain. A French colony, full of promise, unscathed by the sword of the enemy, the last relic of our continental empire in America, was ceded like a flock of sheep! When this unhappy agreement was made public, the cabinet of Versailles strove to appease public opinion, deeply irritated, by insinuating, in its semi-official justifications, that Louisiana was threatened with the same fate as Canada, and that it was abandoned only because it would have been impossible long to keep it.

The Louisianians did not learn until the expiration of eighteen months of the treaty that denationalized them. Their governor, M. d'Abadie, died of sorrow. The grief was universal. During the first years, however, the administration being left in the hands of Frenchmen, the inhabitants of Louisiana might have fancied that they had not changed rulers; but when, in 1768, a Spanish captain-general came to take the government of the colony, all illusion became impossible. The colonists addressed new and useless supplications to the King who abandoned them, agitated plans of emigration in a body to the Anglo-American side of the river, resisted the establishment of the Spanish prohibitory system, and compelled the Spanish governor to quit the country. The following year, a new captain-general, an Irishman by the name of O'Reilly, landed with three thousand troops at New Orleans. The soldiers were able to set foot on the shore only through the intervention of the magistrates. Scarcely had O'Reilly landed, when he arrested, and put to death without trial, the attorney-general and several of the principal inhabitants of the colony

[1] Wenck, t. III. p. 313.

Digitized by Google

(August, 1769). Such was the inauguration of the rule of Spain, which, happily for Louisiana, was not long to retain this beautiful country.[1]

The treaty which sanctioned so many irreparable losses did not need this sorrowful episode to wring the hearts of Frenchmen. Yet the man to whom England owed her brilliant successes desperately opposed this treaty. Pitt deemed the conditions of peace far below what England should have exacted. He did not wish her to lay down her arms till she had stripped France of its last colony. Sick and exhausted, he caused himself to be carried to the parliament, to oppose there, for three whole hours, the proposition of a congratulatory address to George III. on the preliminaries of Fontainebleau. "France," he exclaimed, "is chiefly, if not exclusively, formidable to us as a maritime and commercial power: what we gain in this respect is valuable to us, above all, through the injury to her which results from it. . . . You leave to France the possibility of reviving her navy!"[2]

Although a numerous party espoused the passions and implacable system of Pitt, the address was voted by the House of Commons. England, however great might have been the increase of her wealth, bowed beneath the immense burdens of the war.

It was through regard for Austria that the cabinet of Versailles had postponed the definitive treaty, which was to be only the exact copy of the preliminaries. It wished to give the Empress-Queen time to compound on her side with Frederick II. Austria, obliged to renounce the advantage that she had derived from the French alliance, was about to find herself again alone before the Prussian hero. Already several of the electors and the princes of the Empire, terrified at seeing Prussian parties advancing to the very gates of Ratisbon, had treated separately with Frederick II. Maria Theresa resigned herself to necessity. Frederick saw his kingdom too much exhausted and depopulated not to accept an honorable compromise. Peace was signed, February 15, 1763, at Hubertsburg, between Austria, Prussia, and Saxony. The *statu quo ante bellum* was resumed as a basis. Only Frederick promised his vote to the Archduke Joseph as King of the Romans, and consented for the Duchy of Modena to be transferred to the House of Austria by the marriage of the heiress to one of the archdukes.

[1] Barbé-Marbois, *Hist. de la Louisiane*, p. 147: Flassan, t. VI. p. 478.

[2] Viel-Castel, Lord Chatham; *Revue des Deux Mondes*, t. XXXI. p. 771: 1844.

Digitized by Google

The definitive treaty between France, England, and Spain, had been signed at Paris, February 10.

After this war, which had heaped up almost as many ruins in Germany as the Thirty-years' War, and had mowed down a million of men by the sword, fire, fever, and want,[1] the respective situation of the two principal Germanic powers was absolutely the same as before the first gun had been fired. The balance of power, on the contrary, was wholly destroyed between France and England. France had lost the flower of her marine,[2] her vast dominion in North America, the remains of the conquests of Dupleix and Bussi, her most valuable possession on the western coast of Africa, and several of the Lesser Antilles. England had acquired a prodigious territorial increase, and an overwhelming preponderance in public opinion. For the first time since the Middle Ages, she had conquered France by her own strength, and almost without allies; France having, on the contrary, powerful auxiliaries: she had conquered solely by the superiority of her government. Shame, moral wretchedness, and humiliation, — such was the result to our country of this contest commenced with ardor and glory. A speedily approaching future would show whether England had gained as much in reality as in appearance. In India, yes; and much more. In America, no: the excess of power there was paving the way for a fall.

In short, this disastrous peace had become necessary. The statesmen who signed it can be reproached for little else than the abandonment of Louisiana. But as to the monarch whose wretched policy had led to such a necessity, and the favorite whose wounded vanity had subverted the world and ruined and dishonored France, history cannot sufficiently stigmatize their names.

[1] Frederick estimated the losses of Prussia at one hundred and eighty thousand soldiers, besides the thousands of unfortunates who had perished by the ravages of the Russians. The losses of the Russians amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand men; those of the Austrians, to one hundred and forty thousand; those of the French, to two hundred thousand; of the Anglo-Hanoverians, to one hundred and sixty thousand; of the Swedes, to twenty-five thousand; of the troops of the Circles, to twenty-eight thousand. — *Hist. de la Guerre de Sept Ans*, t. II. p. 414.

[2] Thirty-seven ships and fifty-six frigates, according to Sainte-Croix, t. II. p. 327. Nevertheless, as much had been built since 1755, the French marine was far from being found annihilated at the peace of Paris, as at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle: it had at least forty ships of the line in good condition.

Digitized by Google

APPENDIX.

THE PLAGUE OF MARSEILLES.

POPULAR opinion attributes this terrible calamity to a ship which brought the contagion from Saida in Syria; but nothing is less destitute of proof. The physicians of the Lazaretto of Marseilles had not perceived any symptom of pestilence among the crew of the ship, and nothing is known concerning the passengers, who did not enter the city until after twenty days of quarantine, and the traces of whom were then lost. However this may be, it was on the 25th of May, 1720, that this vessel arrived: in the course of July, symptoms of suspicious diseases appeared in one of the unhealthy and crowded quarters of the old town. The magistrates, together with the greater part of the physicians, at first took the necessary precautions with activity, but quietly, in order to avoid the malady of fear, — the most formidable of contagions. A few physicians, recognizing the plague, had the imprudence to utter this appalling name. The public imagination was immediately terror-stricken. After a storm (July 21), the disease suddenly assumed a violently epidemical character. The greater part of the men of wealth and the office-holders abandoned the city, and left the municipal magistrates destitute of resources and support. The emigration was slackened only by a decree of the Parliament of Aix, threatening with death any one who should quit the territory (suburbs) of Marseilles (July 31). A few men devoted themselves with admirable heroism to the immense task which the cowardice of their natural auxiliaries threw wholly upon them. History should not forget the names of the *échevins* Estelle and Moustier, and especially of that Chevalier Roze, who, without mission or title, came to claim his share in this funereal administration by the right of his magnanimity, and directed, through the superiority of his mind, the worthy associates who were his equals in courage. The Bishop Belzunce, until then appreciated only by the poor, to whom he was a father, was little known abroad, except as an intolerant bigot, unenlightened, and ruled by the Jesuits: he suddenly grew in the presence of danger to the level of the most sainted heroes

Digitized by Google

of Christendom. Abandoned by the ecclesiastical dignitaries, and the rich and selfish Benedictines of St. Victor, he found a steadfast courage in the other religious orders and the clergy of the parishes. The physicians, hastening from Montpelier, from Paris, and from all the scientific centres, showed themselves not less intrepid and humane. Religion and science, as has always been seen in these great ordeals, inspire the same virtues; but the like devotion was not alike fortunate: almost all the physicians escaped; the greater part of the clergy perished.

It is necessary to go back to the lugubrious descriptions left us by the historians of antiquity to form an idea of the picture presented, for several months, by this unhappy city, a prey to the pestilence and the accessory scourges that follow in its train,— dearth and anarchy. When the malady had attained its height, the plague-stricken were seen, driven from their homes by want, by the delirium of the disease, or by the ferocious fear of their nearest friends, lying along the streets and in the squares to die, or piled up in the entrance of the only hospital that was open to them,— a pestiferous gulf, from which none departed alive. Hands and wagons were soon lacking for so many interments. The corpses were piled on each other as thickly as possible in common pits; but, "fermentation having increased the volume of so many bodies heaped up together, the graves vomited forth their frightful deposit" (Lémontei, t. I. p. 383). The *échevin* Moustier, dragging after him a few soldiers, with pickaxe in hand, thrust back into the bosom of the earth these hideous remains. Elsewhere, on the esplanade of the Tourette, nearly two thousand corpses were rotting in the sun, "a pestilential volcano, a horrible mass, which could no longer be transported on account of its fluidity." The Chevalier Roze caused the arches of some old bastions adjoining the esplanade, and hollow to the level of the sea, to be broken in; then surrounded the fatal place at the head of a hundred galley-slaves, pushed before him the monstrous offal with which it was covered, and precipitated it into the waves.

The moral horrors equalled the physical horrors. In the face of these acts which did honor to human nature, every kind of vice and crime ran riot. Under the blow of those scourges which break all the bonds of society, all the ordinary rules and habits of life, or what may be called the middle term of human existence, disappear, and nothing is left but the extremes, the angel on one side, and the animal on the other,—but the animal depraved, without even the laws of instinct for a guide. The multitude now diverted their thoughts by plunging into the delirium of the senses, then rushed into the churches with frenzied outbursts of superstition rather than piety; but numbers of wretches remained strangers to these revulsions of feeling, and unceasingly sought from theft and murder the gold wherewith to keep up a perpetual orgy. The convicts and the acolytes that had been furnished to carry away the corpses assassinated

Digitized by Google

the sick in order to pillage them with impunity. Avarice dictated even more terrible crimes than debauchery. The *échevins* had collected in an alms-house three thousand abandoned children: they were left to die of hunger through economy!

From September to October, the disease diminished by degrees at Marseilles; but it broke out in the rest of Provence. Aix had been attacked as early as the month of August. All the city went into quarantine; each family shut itself up in its house; the sick, at the slightest symptom, were carried to the common infirmaries. This plan of defence was powerless: from seven to eight thousand of the inhabitants perished. A striking moral fact was seen at Aix: the courtesans hastened to the infirmaries to dispute with the nuns the right of serving and dying there. Toulon was much more unfortunate even than Aix: the population was almost annihilated; sixteen thousand inhabitants died out of twenty-six thousand,—a monstrous and unexampled proportion! Arles, in turn, lost nearly seven thousand souls; then Avignon was attacked; and the scourge, crossing the Rhone, precipitated itself upon Vivarais, Cévennes, and Gévaudan, where it slew several thousand persons; and finally died out, in the spring of 1721, on the plains of Languedoc. Marseilles was not wholly freed from it until the same epoch. The Bishop Belzunce, who had struggled against the epidemic with such energetic devotion, contributed perhaps to prolong it by processions and expiatory ceremonies, which massed the population under the empire of impressions too strong for minds so overwrought. Great fires, kindled in the squares by the advice of a physician, had also contributed to redouble the intensity of the disease, instead of purifying the air, as had been hoped.

The loss of the four principal cities of Provence amounted to almost eighty thousand souls, nearly fifty thousand of whom belonged to Marseilles and its suburbs. This loss was speedily repaired. The births multiplied to such an extent in Marseilles in the following period, that, at the expiration of five years, the population had regained its level. An insatiable thirst for pleasure, a *rage for living*, had taken possession of this people escaped from the tomb. "A mad joy," says Lémontei, "intoxicated this city of heirs." In forgetting the disease, they were also too forgetful of those who had heroically sacrificed themselves to combat it: the cowards who had fled returned only to vilify all that had been done in their absence; and the Chevalier Roze, who had ruined himself to save the city, was not even indemnified.

The government of the Regency does not appear to deserve all the reproaches that have sometimes been addressed to it with respect to the plague of Marseilles: it despatched medical assistance, grain, and money. Law, on the brink of ruin, sent a hundred thousand francs from his purse. Dubois, it is true, on the contrary, obstructed the despatch of three ships, laden with wheat, by Pope Clement XI. to Marseilles. Dubois, on bad terms at that moment with the Holy Father, did not desire this

Digitized by Google

obligation to be incurred to him. This contrast at once depicts Dubois and Law. The ships of the Pope were captured on the way by a Barbary pirate, who, more Christian than the Abbé Dubois, released them on learning of their destination.

See, concerning the plague of Marseilles, Lémontei's *Histoire de la Régence*, t. I. ch. xi. This is one of the best articles written by this witty and vividly colored pen

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

FEB 19 1895
DEC 1 1900
JAN 28 1902
DEC 22 1903
JAN 6 1906
DUE DEC 9 1927

Digitized by Google